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Indian History of Winneshiek County

Charles Philip Hexom

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INDIAN HISTORY
OF
WINNESHIEK COUNTY

BY
CHARLES PHILIP HEXOM

INDIAN HISTORY OF WINNESHIEK COUNTY

Compiled by
CHARLES PHILIP HEXOM

A. K. BAILEY & SON, INCORPORATED
DECORAH, IOWA
1913

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PREFACE

In the preparation of this article it has been the compiler's aim to make the work as complete and correct as possible. Diligent search has been made for information, and considerable pains have been taken to give the people of Winneshiek county a reliable account of the Indians who once inhabited this section of the country. The writer has discovered that a number of erroneous statements in regard to these Indians have unfortunately found their way into print. In such instances every effort has been made to procure accurate information.

In gathering the data here assembled the writer has had the kind assistance of the Wisconsin Historical Society, the Iowa Library Commission, and the United States Ethnological Bureau. Thanks are also due to Oliver Lamere (a first cousin of Angel De Cora), who has made diligent search for desired information among members of his tribe on their reservation in Nebraska; Geo. W. Kingsley, Angel De Cora, Little Winneshiek, and Antoine Grignon (all of whom are Winnebago Indians, except the last, who is part Winnebago and part Sioux); Dr. Eben D. Pierce; Roger C. Mackenstadt; Chas. H. Saunders, and H. J. Goddard.

All of the above have responded in a most gratifying manner to requests for information, some of them taking the trouble to prepare long communications, which have been indispensable in the preparation of the following article and which the writer cherishes as among his most valued possessions. All quotations credited to them in this article have been taken from letters received by the writer since December, 1912.

In regard to Angel De Cora, a summary of her career is given in the body of the article, where the main facts about Antoine Grignon's life will also be found. That the reader may form a proper conception of the value of the information imparted by other individuals mentioned above (and all this has a bearing on the trustworthiness of the article), the following statements are appended:—

"During the month of August, 1911, there came to Madison from the Nebraska reservation two Winnebago Indians, Mr. Oliver Lamere and Mr. John Rave. Both men were in the employ of Dr. Paul Radin of the American Bureau of Ethnology, who for several years past has been conducting researches among their tribe for the government. They remained in Wisconsin until the first weeks in September. Both were Indians of exceptional intelligence. Mr. Lamere is a grandson of Alexander Lamere, one of the group of early Lake Koshkonong fur-traders, and a grandson of Oliver Armel, an early Madison fur-trader. Mr. Lamere [Oliver] acted as Dr. Radin's assistant and interpreter." From an article in "The Wisconsin Archeologist," 1911, by Charles E. Brown, secretary and curator of The Wisconsin Archeological Society, and chief of The State (Wis.) Historical Museum, Madison, Wis.

"George Kingsley * * * * a member of the Wisconsin Branch of the Winnebago Tribe of Indians, I consider to be the best authority on these matters."—L. M. Compton, Superintendent of Tomah School (United States Indian Service), Wisconsin.

Dr. Eben D. Pierce is a member of the state (Wis.) and county (Trempealeau) Historical Societies. He has written a biography of Antoine Grignon, a short history of the Winnebago Indians, and has contributed several articles on the history of that section.

Roger C. Mackenstadt, now at the Uintah and Ouray Indian Agency, Utah, was formerly chief clerk at the Winnebago reservation in Nebraska.

Chas. H. Saunders is a white man who has lived with the Indians most of the time (since he was thirteen years old). He married into the Waukon family of Winnebago Indians, whose language he speaks fluently. He was raised at Lansing, Ia., and was for a number of years a resident of Wisconsin. He now resides in Nebraska.

H. J. Goddard of Fort Atkinson has been a resident of Winneshiek county since 1849. Mr. Goddard has willingly placed at the disposal of the writer his well-stored memory of early recollections. He is a Civil War veteran and is thus especially competent to speak with authority in regard to military matters connected with the fort.

Other old settlers have also responded cheerfully to requests for information. In most instances their names appear in the article. The writer acknowledges a debt of gratitude to them all.

The following authorities have been consulted:

"History of Winneshiek and Allamakee Counties."—W. E. Alexander, 1882.

"Atlas of Winneshiek County."—Anderson & Goodwin, 1905.

"The Making of Iowa."—Henry Sabin, LL. D., 1900.

"History of Iowa," v. 1.—G. F. Gue, 1903.

"The Red Men of Iowa."—A. R. Fulton, 1882.

"The Indian, The Northwest."—C. & N. W. Ry., 1901.

"North Americans of Yesterday."—F. S. Dellenbaugh.

"Handbook of American Indians."—B. of A. E., 1911.

"Smithsonian Report," 1885.

"Annals of Iowa."¹

"The Wisconsin Archeologist."²

CHARLES PHILIP HEXOM.

June 18, 1913.

¹ Articles by Eliphalet Price, C. A. Clark, and War Dept. Records of Fort Atkinson.

² "The Winnebago Tribe," by P. V. Lawson, LL. B.

THE WINNEBAGO TRIBE

Taki maka a-icha'gha hena mita'wa-ye lo—Yo, yoyo!

All that grows upon the earth is mine—Yo, yoyo!

—Translation of a Sioux song.

The Winnebago tribe is the fourth group of the great Siouan, or Dakota, family. The Winnebagoes were styled by the Sioux, *Hotanke*, or the "big-voiced people;" by the Chippewas, *Wini-pig*, or "filthy water;" by the Sauks and Foxes, *Wini-pyagohagi*, or "people of the filthy water." Allouez spells the name *Ovenibigoutz*. The French frequently called them *Puans*, or *Puants*, names often roughly translated *Stinkards*. The Iowas called them *Ochungaraw*. They called themselves *Ochungurah*, or *Hotcangara*. Dr. J. O. Dorsey, the distinguished authority on the Siouan tribes, states that the Siouan root, "*changa*," or "*hanga*," signifies "first, foremost, original or ancestral." Thus the Winnebagoes called themselves *Hotcangara*, "the people speaking the original language," or "people of the parent speech." Traditional and linguistic evidence shows that the Iowa Indians sprang from the Winnebago stem, which appears to have been the mother stock of some other of the southwestern Siouan tribes.

The term "Sioux" is a French corruption of *Nadowe-is-iw*, the name given them by the Chippewa Indians of the Algonquin family. It signifies "snake," whence is derived the further meaning "enemy." The name Dakota, or Lakota, by which the principal tribes of the Siouan stock call themselves, means "confederated," "allied."

Regarding the remote migrations that must have taken place in such a widespread stock as the Siouan, different theories are held. An eastern origin is now pretty well established for this stock; for in Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Mississippi were the homes of tribes now extinct, which ethnologists class as belonging to the Siouans.* The prehistoric migration of these Indians, which undoubtedly was gradual, proceeded towards the west; while the Dākotas, Winnebagoes, and cognate tribes, it appears, took a more northerly course.

Passing to the authentic history of the Winnebagoes the first known meeting between this tribe and the whites was in 1634, when the French ambassador, Jean Nicolet, found them in Wisconsin near Green Bay. At this time they probably extended to Lake Winnebago. How long the tribe had maintained its position in that territory previous to the coming of the whites is unknown. They were then numerous and powerful. Father Pierre Claude Allouez spent the winter of 1669-70 at Green Bay preaching to the Winnebagoes and their Central Algonquian neighbors.

The Winnebagoes constituted one party in a triple alliance, to which also the Sauks and Foxes belonged, and were always present with the Foxes in their battles against the French, and their ancient enemy the Illinois Indians. In an effort to combine all the tribes against the Foxes, the French in some way won over the Winnebagoes. After being on unfriendly terms with the Foxes for several years, the old friendship was revived; yet the Winnebagoes managed to retain the friendship of the French and continue in uninterrupted trade relations with them, for, following the missionary, came the trader.

In 1763 France ceded Canada to England. The Winnebagoes, however, were reluctant to transfer their allegiance to

* "The Siouan Tribes of the East," by James Mooney, Bulletin Bureau of Ethnology, 1894, Washington.

the English; but when they did, they remained firm in their new fealty. The English were known to the Winnebagoes as Moⁿhiⁿtoⁿga, meaning "Big Knife;" this term is said to have originated from the kind of swords worn by the English.* When the thirteen colonies declared their independence in 1776, the Winnebagoes allied themselves with the British and fought with them through the Revolutionary War. They participated in the border outbreaks in Ohio and were among the savages defeated by General Anthony Wayne on August 20, 1794. In the War of 1812-15 they espoused the cause of England, and in the years immediately following this war they became quite insolent.

The so-called Winnebago War of 1827 was of short duration. The energetic movements of Governor Cass, the promptness of the militia under Colonel Henry Dodge, and the despatch of General Atkinson of the federal army filled the Winnebagoes with such respect for the power of the United States that the disturbance was quelled before it had fairly begun. At this time the tribe numbered nearly 7,000. It might also be mentioned that a few of the tribe secretly joined the Sauks and Foxes in the Black Hawk War of 1832.

Smallpox visited the tribe twice before 1836, and in that year more than one-fourth of the tribe died. Mr. George Catlin, famous painter of the Indians, made the statement, when at Prairie du Chien in 1836, that, "The only war that suggests itself to the eye of the traveler through their country is the war of sympathy and pity."

* "The Omaha Tribe," by Alice C. Fletcher and Francis La Flesche. Eth. Ann. 27, pg. 611.

REMOVAL TO IOWA

Historical evidence reveals the fact that at one time the northern part of Winneshiek county formed a small part of the vast hunting grounds of the Sioux Indians, and that the southern portion was given over to the Sauks and Foxes. In a council held at Prairie du Chien, August 19, 1825, a boundary line was established between the Sioux, on the north, and the Sauks and Foxes, on the south. The principal object of this treaty was to make peace between these contending tribes as to the limits of their respective hunting grounds in Iowa.

This boundary line began at the mouth of the Upper Iowa river and followed the stream, which traverses Winneshiek county, to its source. In order to decrease still further the encounters between the Sauks and Foxes, on the one hand, and the Sioux, on the other, the United States secured, at a council held at Prairie du Chien July 15, 1830, a strip of territory twenty miles wide on each side of the boundary line already established and extending from the Mississippi to the east fork of the Des Moines. This strip, forty miles in width, was termed the "Neutral Ground." The tribes on either side were to hunt and fish on it unmolested, a privilege they ceased to enjoy when this territory was ceded to the Winnebagoes. In this way the tract of land now known as Winneshiek county became a part of the Neutral Ground.

September 15, 1832, the Winnebagoes ceded to the United States their lands south of the Wisconsin and Fox rivers, east of the Mississippi. The government on its part, by this treaty granted to the Winnebagoes "to be held as other Indian lands

are held, that part of the tract of country on the west side of the Mississippi river known as the Neutral Ground, embraced within the following limits." The boundaries specified confined the Winnebagoes to that portion of the Neutral Ground extending forty miles west of the Mississippi. By the terms of this treaty they were to be paid \$10,000 annually for twenty-seven years, beginning in September, 1833.

November 1, 1837, a treaty was concluded with the Winnebagoes at Washington, by the provisions of which they ceded to the United States the remainder of their lands on the east side and certain interests on the west side of the Mississippi river, and agreed to remove to a portion of the Neutral Ground in Northeastern Iowa, set aside for them in the previous treaty of September 15, 1832. This treaty of 1837 was loudly proclaimed by the tribe to be a fraud. It was stated that the delegation which visited Washington in that year had no authority to execute such an instrument. Chiefs, also, who were of this party all made the same declaration.*

The first attempt to remove the Winnebagoes was made in 1840, when a considerable number were induced to move to the Turkey river. That year a portion of the Fifth and Eighth regiments of U. S. infantry came to Portage, Wis., to conduct their removal. Antoine Grignon and others were connected with this force as interpreters.

Two large boats were provided to transport the Indians down the Wisconsin river to Prairie du Chien. Captain Sumner, who later was a commanding officer at Fort Atkinson, secured 250 Winnebagoes in southern Wisconsin. These were also taken to Prairie du Chien. They first disliked the idea of going on to the Neutral Ground, because on the south were the Sauks and Foxes, and on the north were the Sioux, and with

* Wisconsin Archeologist, Vol. 6, No. 3, pg. 112.

these tribes they were not on friendly terms. Considerable resentment was felt by the Sauks and Foxes towards the Winnebagoes for having delivered Black Hawk over to the whites, although previous to this occasion the Winnebagoes had been in intimate relationship with these tribes. However, they soon grew to love the Iowa reservation.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

And they painted on the grave-posts
On the graves yet unforgotten,
Each his own ancestral Totem,
Each the symbol of his household;—

—The Song of Hiawatha.

In each tribe there existed, on the basis of kinship a division, into clans and gentes. The names given to these divisions were usually those of the animals, birds, reptiles, or inanimate objects from which their members claimed descent, or which were regarded as guardian deities common to them all; these were known as their totems.

The term "clan" implies descent in the female, and "gens" in the male line. Clans and gentes were generally organized into phratries; and phratries, into tribes. A phratry was an organization for ceremonial and other festivals.

The Winnebago social organization was based on two phratries, known as the Upper, or Air, and the Lower, or Earth, divisions. The Upper division contained four clans: (1) Thunder-bird, (2) War People, (3) Eagle, (4) Pigeon (extinct); while the Lower division contained eight clans: (1) Bear, (2) Wolf, (3) Water-spirit, (4) Deer, (5) Elk, (6) Buffalo, (7) Fish, (8) Snake.

The Thunder-bird, and Bear, clans were regarded as the leading clans of their respective phratries. Both had definite functions. The lodge of the former was the peace lodge, over which the chief of the tribe presided, while the lodge of the Bear clan was the war, or disciplinary, lodge. Each clan had a num-

ber of individual customs, relating to birth, the naming-feast, death, and the funeral-wake. An Upper individual must marry a Lower individual, and vice versa.

When Carver, an early traveler, first came in contact with the Winnebagoes, their chief was a woman. The man, however, was the head of each family. Where clans existed, a man could become a member of any particular clan only by birth, adoption, or transfer in infancy from his mother's to his father's clan, or vice versa. The place of woman in a tribe was not that of a slave or beast of burden. The existence of the gentile organization, in most tribes with descent in the female line, forbade that she be subjected to any such indignity.

Dr. J. O. Dorsey obtained a list of the gentes of the Hotcangara, or Winnebagoes.* They were (1) Shungikikarachada ('Wolf'); (2) Honchikikarachada ('Black Bear'); (3) Huwanikikarachada ('Elk'); (4) Wakanikikarachada ('Snake'); (5) Waninkikikarachada ('Bird'); (6) Cheikikarachada ('Buffalo'); (7) Chaikikarachada ('Deer'); (8) Wakchekhiikikarachada ('Water-monster'). The Bird gens was composed of four sub-gentes, namely: (a) Hichakhshepara ('Eagle'), (b) Ruchke ('Pigeon'), (c) Kerechun ('Hawk'), (d) Wakanchara ('Thunderbird'). It seems probable that each gens was thus subdivided into four sub-gentes.

In 1843 they were on the Neutral Ground in different bands, the principal one, called the School band, occupying territory along the Turkey river.

* The late J. Owen Dorsey of the Bureau of American Ethnology, in Bull. 30, pg. 961.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

The Winnebagoes are distinctly a timber people, and always confined themselves to the larger streams. In early days their wearing apparel consisted commonly of a breechclout, moccasins, leggings, and robes of dressed skins. The advent among them of the whites enabled them to add blankets, cloths, and ornaments to their scanty wardrobes.

Jonathan Emerson Fletcher, the Indian agent at the Turkey river, furnished Mr. Henry R. Schoolcraft, LL. D., at one time Indian agent for Wisconsin Territory and author of "Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States," a description of the costume of the Winnebagoes, from which the following is condensed*: "White blankets are preferred in winter, and colored in the summer. Red is a favorite color among the young, and green with the aged. Calico shirts, cloth leggings, and buckskin moccasins are worn by both sexes. In addition to the above articles, the women wear a broadcloth petticoat, or mantelet, suspended from the hips and extending below the knee.

"Wampum, ear-bobs, rings, bracelets, and bells are the most common ornaments worn by them. Head-dresses ornamented with eagle's feathers are worn by the warriors on public occasions. The chiefs wear nothing peculiar to designate their office, except it be medals received from the President of the United States.

* Wisconsin Archeologist, Vol. 6, No. 3, pg. 121.

"Some of the young men and women paint their blankets with a variety of colors and figures. A large majority of the young and middle-aged of both sexes paint their faces when they dress for a dance.

"Old and young women divide their hair from the forehead to the back of the crown, and wear it collected in a roll on the back of the neck, confined with ribbons and bead-strings. The men and boys wear their hair cut similar to the whites, except that they all wear a small quantity on the back of the crown, long and braided, which braids are tied at the end with a ribbon. The men have but little beard which is usually plucked out by tweezers."

One style of Winnebago wigwam consisted of an arched frame-work of poles firmly set in the ground and lashed together with strips of bark and so arranged as to give it sloping sides and a rounded top. Cross-pieces of wood secured the poles to one another. The roof and sides were covered with pieces of bark, or matting. The general outline was round or elliptical. Conical lodges were employed chiefly in the summer time. Fur robes, matting, and blankets served for bedding. Branches were heaped around the side walls, and on these, covered with blankets, served as a bed.

Mr. Fletcher stated * that the lodges at the Turkey river, Iowa, were "from twelve to forty feet in length, and from ten to twenty feet in width, and fifteen feet in height from the ground to the top of the roof. The largest would accommodate three families of ten persons each. They generally have two doors. Fires, one for each family, are made, along the space through the center. The smoke escapes through apertures in the roof. The summer lodge is of lighter materials and is portable."

* Wisconsin Archeologist, Vol. 6, No. 3, pg. 124, condensed from information furnished to H. R. Schoolcraft.

Council houses and other structures were erected in each village. Mr. Oliver Lamere states: "It is said that all of their councils were held at the Turkey river, as that was their agency at the time. Usually everything went as the chiefs wanted it." Regarding the vicinity of Fort Atkinson, Mr. H. J. Goddard says: "There were two Indian camping grounds south of here, one about a quarter of a mile, and the other half a mile, distant. One had about 50 wigwams, and the other between 300 and 400. They took poles and stuck them in the ground, then bent them over and tied the tops together and covered them with bark. The bark was peeled from the water- or slippery-elm trees during the spring."

Bark served the Indians in a multitude of ways. It was stripped from trees at the proper season by hacking it around so that it could be taken off in sheets of the desired length. The Winnebagoes also made a kind of drink from bark. Mr. Lamere says, "They also made a matting from reeds sewed or matted together with strings made out of bass-wood bark; of course, they used canvas when they could purchase it, but their permanent lodges would be of bark."

It was the man's duty to protect his village and family, and by hunting to provide meat and skins. The women dried the meat, dressed the hides, made the clothing, and, in general, performed all the household duties. The processes employed for dressing skins were various, such as fleshing, scraping, braining, stripping, graining, and working. In the domestic economy of the Indian, skins were his most valued and useful material, as they also later became his principal trading asset. A list of the articles made of this material would embrace a great many of the Indian's principal possessions.

Moccasins and other articles made of skin were often covered with artistic bead-work, replete with tribal symbolism. The

Winnebagoes also had, not long ago, a well developed porcupine quill industry.

In common with other tribes the Winnebagoes were accustomed to prepare dried and smoked fish and meat. Nuts, wild fruits, and edible roots of various kinds were also used for food. Corn was raised and such vegetables as squash, pumpkins, beans, potatoes and watermelons. Corn was often eaten green, but usually after it had been dried, ground, and made into bread; it was sometimes boiled with meat. At the Turkey river near Fort Atkinson the Indians cached their corn in holes dug in the ground three or four feet square and about three feet deep. Wild rice was raised and was prepared by being boiled with meat and vegetables. Shelled dried corn, dried hulled fruit, and nuts were cached in storage pits for future use. Tobacco was raised, but only in small quantities. Notwithstanding the abundance of animal and vegetal food that the fields and forest afforded, the Indians suffered occasionally from famine. For wood the limbs of trees were used, but not the trunk; in the neighborhood of Fort Atkinson evidence remains to-day of this practice.

Of the Winnebago marriage customs Moses Paquette, who went (1845) to the Presbyterian school at the Turkey river, stated* in 1882: "Presents to the parents of a woman, by either the parents of the man or the man himself, if accepted, usually secure her for a partner. However much the woman may dislike the man, she considers it her bounden duty to go and at least try to live with him. Divorce is easy among them. There are no laws compelling them to live together. Sometimes there are marriages for a specified time, say a few months or a year. When separations occur, the woman usually takes the children with her to the home of her parents. But so long as the union exists, it is deemed to be sacred, and there are few instances of

* Wisconsin Archeologist, Vol. 6, No. 3, pg. 126.

infidelity. Quite a number of the bucks have two wives, who live on apparently equal, free, and easy terms; but although there is no rule about the matter, I never heard of any of the men having more than two wives. With all this ease of divorce, numerous Indian couples remain true to each other for life." Many of the early traders took Winnebago wives.

The Indians had their favorite pastimes and games, some of which were played by the women and children. There were also several kinds of dances for various occasions.

Regarding their burial customs, the graves were in later times protected by logs, stones, brush, or pickets. With the bodies of the deceased were buried their personal possessions or symbolical objects. With the corpse of a woman were buried her implements of labor. The graves of chiefs and persons of distinction were sometimes enclosed with pickets. Over such a grave it was customary to place a white flag. The blackening of the face by mourners was a common custom. In the winter the remains were encased and placed on a scaffold and then elevated into the branches of a tree, or placed between two trees. In the spring the permanent burial was made in a shallow grave. Over this was erected an A-shaped structure, consisting of two short, forked posts, which, placed one at each end of the grave, supported a cross-piece. Against this frame-work were placed wooden slabs.

Lengthwise the graves at the Turkey river extended from east to west, in order that the dead might "look towards the happy land" that was supposed to lie somewhere in the direction of the setting sun. The body of the dead was sometimes placed in the grave in a sitting posture, the head and chest extending above the ground. A pipe of tobacco was buried with an adult male, and a war-club was placed in the grave of a warrior. The hieroglyphics painted on the post at the head of a

warrior's grave represented the exploits of those who danced about the grave at his funeral.

Mr. Goddard says: "There were about a dozen or more Indian graves close to the fort, but these have long since been obliterated. An Indian child, about seven or eight years of age, was put above ground in a coffin placed between, and near the top of, four cedar posts set in the ground, and about seven or eight feet high. I was told by the Indians who later traveled through the country quite frequently that the child belonged to a Chippewa woman who was visiting the Winnebagoes. Later, a man who stopped at my place took from inside the heavily beaded blanket, in which the child was wrapped when buried, a round mirror ornament with a loop for suspension, about three inches in diameter, on the back of which was a picture of General Jackson.

"An Indian grave was on the top of a hill in Jackson township, section twenty. The Indians told me that a chief called Black Bear was buried there; however, there is nothing further authentic to prove this. The grave was surrounded by a stockade made of boards split out of logs and was seven feet high; it enclosed a space about seven by eight feet in area. The boards were spiked together.

"Near the Little Turkey river, a fork of the Turkey river, at a point about one and one-half miles from Waucoma in Fayette county, was a farm of about 100 acres broken up (supposedly by the government) and owned by a chief called Whaling Thunder [evidently Whirling Thunder, but not definitely known]. Here Whaling (?) Thunder died, and on his land was a group of about thirty graves, six Indians being buried in one grave."

Hon. Abraham Jacobson, of Springfield township, stated*

* "Reminiscences of Pioneer Norwegians," by Hon. A. Jacobson in "The Illustrated Historical Atlas of Winneshiek County, Iowa," 1905, Sec. II, pg. 12.

that, "On the banks of the Upper Iowa river many Indian graves were found. The bodies were buried in a sitting position, with the head sometimes above ground. A forked stick put up like a post at each end of the grave held a ridge pole on which leaned thin boards placed slanting to each side of the grave. Thus each grave presented the appearance of a gable of a small house."

On Mr. J. I. Tavener's land in West Decorah are three mounds, or artificial hillocks, now nearly obliterated by cultivation. These mounds are circular in form and, before being worn down by the plow, were low, broad, round-topped cones from two and one-half to three feet high in the center. The largest of the group was about forty feet in diameter. Conical mounds are, as a rule, depositories of the dead. As yet, no bones have been exhumed from any of these mounds, so that it is not known at present what purpose they served; but it seems probable that they were burial mounds.

The early settlers furnished evidence of the existence of many Indian graves throughout the county, notably where the city of Decorah is located. These graves are now almost imperceptible.

RELIGION

Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,
Who have faith in God and Nature,
Who believe, that in all ages
Every human heart is human,
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings
For the good they comprehend not,
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness
And are lifted up and strengthened;—
Listen to this simple story,—

—The Song of Hiawatha.

The fundamental religious concept of the Indian is the belief in the existence of magic power in animate and inanimate objects. This gave rise to their idea that there are men who possess supernatural power. This magic power is called Maⁿ'una (Earth-maker)* by the Winnebagoes, and corresponds to the *Gitchi Manito* of the Central Algonquian tribes, and *Wakanda*† of the Siouan tribes. As a verb, "wakanda" signifies "to reckon as holy or sacred, to worship;" the noun is "wakan" and means "a spirit, something consecrated." "Wakan," as an adjective, is defined as "spiritual, sacred, consecrated, wonderful, incomprehensible, mysterious." "Wakan" and various other forms of that word are of common occurrence in the Winnebago language.

The Winnebago mythology consists of large cycles relating to the five personages, Trickster, Bladder, Turtle, He-who-

* Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 30, part 2, pg. 960.

† Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 30, part 2, pg. 897.

wears-heads-as-earrings, and the Hare. Other deities known to them are Disease-giver, Sun, Moon, Morning Star, the Spirits of the Night, One-horn, the Earth, and the Water.

The Indian had no understanding of a single, all-powerful deity, the "Great Spirit," till the Europeans, often unconsciously, informed him of their own belief. He believed in a multitude of spirits that were the source of good or bad fortune, and whom he feared to offend.* He seems to have had no conception of a future punishment. The mortuary rites of the Winnebagoes, and other tribes, testify to the fact that they believed in a life after death; but as to the nature of "the happy land of the west" their ideas were vague.

The Winnebagoes had two important tribal ceremonies, the *Mankani*, or Medicine Dance, and the *Wagigo*, or Winter Feast. The Medicine Dance could take place only in summer; and the Winter Feast, only in winter. The Medicine Dance was a secret society, ungraded, into which men and women could be initiated on payment of a certain amount of money. The purpose of the society was the prolongation of life and the instilling of certain virtues, none of which related to war. These virtues were instilled by means of the "shooting" ceremony, the pretended shooting of a shell, contained in an otter-skin bag, into the body of the one to be initiated. The ceremony was performed in a long tent occupied by five ceremonial bands, whose positions of honor depended on the order of invitation. The general ceremony itself was public, but a secret vapor-bath ceremony preceded, and a secret ceremony intervened between the first and second parts.

The Winter Feast was a war feast and the only distinctively clan ceremonial among the Winnebagoes. Each clan had a sacred bundle, which was in the hands of some male individual, and was handed down from one generation to another, care

* Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 30, part 2, pg. 284.

being always taken to keep it in the same clan. The purpose of this feast was to appease all the supposed deities known to them. Mr. Fletcher, the agent at the Turkey river, gave Mr. Schoolcraft a description of the War dance and the Medicine society.

There were a number of other important ceremonies, of which the best known were the *Herucka* and the Buffalo Dance. The latter was performed in the spring, and had for its purpose the magical calling of the buffalo herds. All those who pretended to have had supernatural communication with the Buffalo spirit might participate in the ceremony, irrespective of clan. It seems that the object of the *Herucka* was to stimulate an heroic spirit.

Moses Paquette gave Dr. Thwaites of Wisconsin a brief account of the Buffalo Dance, which he describes, as "Probably the most popular of their dances." "They represent," he continues, "themselves to be bisons, imitating the legitimate motions and noises of the animal, and introducing a great many others that would quite astonish the oldest buffalo in existence. Of course it has been a long time since any Winnebagoes ever saw buffaloes; their antics are purely traditionary, handed down from former generations of dancers."*

Other dances and feasts were the Snake, Scalp, Grizzly-bear, Sore-eye, and Ghost dances. Little Hill, a Winnebago chief, gave Mr. Fletcher an account of their creation, which, in all its parts, bears testimony to their belief in numerous spirits.† Mr. Lamere states that, "The Buffalo Dance was carried on by the Winnebagoes for a long time, but the dance that they seemed to have liked and indulged in mostly while there [Iowa] was the Fish Dance, which was only a dance of amusement. The *Herucka* dance was adopted from some of the western tribes

* Wisconsin Archeologist, Vol. 6, No. 3, pg. 130.

† "Red Men of Iowa," by A. R. Fulton.

and was brought back by the Winnebagoes who enlisted as scouts during the Sioux outbreak in 1862 and was introduced after the Winnebagoes came here to Nebraska;" he further states,—“The Thunder-bird was held in awe by the Winnebagoes, and they believed that thunder-storms were caused by these beings, the lightning being caused by the opening and closing of their eyes; the Winnebagoes do not describe them as birds, but beings of the human type and always wearing cedar boughs on their head, or hair, and carrying flat war-clubs.”

GENEALOGY AND HISTORY OF THE DECORAH FAMILY

How fair is Decorah,
Our city named so
For the Indians that roamed
O'er its hills years ago,
Whose well trodden pathways
The story could tell
How from all directions
They came here to dwell.

In fitting remembrance
These lines we inscribe
To Waukon Decorah,
A chief of their tribe,
Whose name is a landmark
And honored shall stand
For heeding the fiat
"Move on, yield your land."

And Indians that peopled
This beautiful site,
Reluctant but friendly
Relinquished their right.
They left us this valley
With beauties untold,
Gave way to the settlers,
Our pioneers bold.

Things have changed, to be sure,
In this valley,—still
'Tis but sixty odd years
Since they camped on yon hill
Where now stands the courthouse
A pride of our town,
The heart of the county,
Of widespread renown.

—Mrs. John C. Hexom.

Hopokoekau, or "Glory of the Morning," also known as the Queen of the Winnebagoes, was the mother of a celebrated line of chiefs, all of whom, well known to border history, bore in some form the name Decorah. Her Indian name is also given as Wa-ho-po-e-kau. She was the daughter of one of the principal Winnebago chiefs. There is no record of the date of her birth or death.

She became the wife of Sabrevoir De Carrie, who probably came to Wisconsin with the French army, in which he was an officer, in 1728. He resigned his commission in 1729, and became a fur-trader among the Winnebagoes, subsequently marrying "Glory of the Morning." He was adopted into her clan and highly honored. After seven or eight years, during which time two sons and a daughter were born to him, he left her, taking with him the daughter. The Queen refused to go with her husband, and remained in her home with her two sons. "The result is to-day that one-half or two-thirds of the Winnebago tribe have more or less of the Decorah blood in their veins."* Through the intervening generations there has been no other mixture of Caucasian blood, so that the Decorahs of to-day are probably as nearly full-bloods as any Indians in any part of the country.

De Carrie returned to Canada, re-entered the army, and was killed at Ste Foye in the spring of 1760. The daughter whom he took with him, became the wife of a trader, Constant Keri-goufili, whose son, Sieur Laurent Fily (so-called), died about 1846.

Captain Jonathan Carver, who visited the Queen in 1766, states that she received him graciously, and luxuriously entertained him during the four days he remained in her village, which "contained fifty houses." Her two sons, "Being the descendants of a chief on the mother's side, when they arrived at

* Statement by Geo. W. Kingsley.

manhood * * * * assumed the dignity of their rank by inheritance. They were generally good Indians and frequently urged their claims to the friendship of the whites, by saying they were themselves half white."

Choukeka Dekaury, or Spoon Decorah, sometimes called the Ladle, was the eldest son of Sabrevoir De Carrie and Hopokoe-kau. The name is also rendered Chau-ka-ka and Chou-ga-rah. After having been made chief he became the leader of attacks on the Chippewas during a war between them and the Winnebagoes, but he maintained friendly relations with the whites. He was the ancestor of the Portage branch of the family. It was principally through his influence that the treaty of June 3, 1816, at St. Louis, Mo., was brought about.

His wife, Flight of Geese, was a daughter of Nawkaw (known also as Carrymaunee and Walking Turtle), whose management of tribal affairs was decidedly peaceful. According to La Ronde, Choukeka's death occurred in 1816, when he was "quite aged." He left six sons and five daughters. The sons were: (1) Konokah, or Old Gray-headed Decorah; (2) Augah, or the Black Decorah, named by La Ronde, Ruch-ka-scha-ka, or White Pigeon; (3) Anaugah, or the Raisin Decorah, named by La Ronde, Chou-me-ne-ka-ka; (4) Nah-ha-sauch-e-ka, or Rascal Decorah; (5) Wau-kon-ga-ka, or the Thunder Hearer; (6) Ong-skaka, or White Wolf, who died young. Three of the daughters married Indians. One married a trapper named Dennis De Riviere and later married Perische Grignon. The other married Jean Lecuyer.

Cyrus Thomas* makes the statement that, "From Choukeka's daughters who married white men are descended several well known families of Wisconsin and Minnesota."

Chah-post-kaw-kaw, or the Buzzard Decorah, was the second son of De Carrie and "Glory of the Morning." He settled at

* Of the Bureau of American Ethnology.

La Crosse in 1787, with a band of Winnebagoes, and was soon after killed there. He had two sons: (1) Big Canoe, or One-eyed Decorah; and (2) Wakun-ha-ga, or Snake Skin, known as Waukon Decorah.

Old Gray-Headed Decorah, called by the whites Konakah (eldest) Decorah, often mentioned as Old Dekaury, was the eldest son and successor of Choukeka Dekaury. His common Indian name was Schachipkaka, or The War Eagle. The signature "De-ca-ri" attached to the treaty of Prairie des Chiens (as the word is frequently spelled in early documents), Michigan Territory, August 19, 1825, is probably that of Old Dekaury. He signed the treaty of Prairie du Chien, Michigan Territory, August 1, 1829, as "Hee-tsha-wau-sharp-skaw-kau, or White War Eagle. "Among those representing the Fort Winnebago deputation at the treaty of Fort Armstrong, Rock Island, Ill., September 15, 1832, he signed as "Hee-tshah-wau-saip-skaw-skaw, or White War Eagle, De-kau-ray, sr."

Old Decorah was born in 1747, and died at Peten well, the high rock on the Wisconsin river, April 20, 1836, about ninety years old. Old De-kau-ry's town contained over 100 lodges, and was the largest of the Winnebago villages. Before he died he called a Catholic priest, who baptized him the day of his death.

Before his father's death, in 1816, Old Gray-headed Decorah had joined a band of Winnebagoes who took part, August 2, 1813, in the attack led by General Proctor, with 500 regulars and 800 Indians, on Fort Stephenson on lower Sandusky river, Ohio, which was so gallantly defended by Major George Croghan with a force of 150 Americans and only one cannon. He also fought with Proctor and Tecumseh, a celebrated Shawnee chief, at the battle of the Thames, Canada, where a great part of the British army was either slain or captured by the American forces under General Wm. H. Harrison, October 5, 1813, and

where Tecumseh was shot. Old Decorah was held as a hostage for the delivery of Red Bird, a war chief, during the so-called Winnebago War. Old Decorah gave assurance to General Atkinson, during this war, of the peaceable intentions of the Winnebagoes.

It was while Major Zachary Taylor was located at Prairie du Chien that he received from Old Gray-headed Decorah a peace pipe now in the State Historical Museum at Madison, Wis. This calumet is a fine specimen, the head is of catlinite inlaid with lead polished to look like silver. The stem, or wooden handle, is about three feet long, rather rudely carved.

Mrs. J. H. Kinzie described* him as "The most noble, dignified, and venerable of his own or indeed of any other tribe. His fine Roman countenance, rendered still more striking by his bald head, with one solitary tuft of long silvery hair neatly tied and falling back on his shoulders; his perfectly neat, appropriate dress, almost without ornament, and his courteous manner, never laid aside, under any circumstances, all combined to give him the highest place in the consideration of all who knew him."

Mrs. Kinzie further states † : "The noble Old Day-kau-ray came one day from the Barribault to apprise us of the state of his village. More than forty of his people, he said, had now been for many days without food, save bark and roots. My husband accompanied him to the commanding officer to tell his story, and ascertain if any amount of food could be obtained from that quarter. The result was the promise of a small allowance of flour, sufficient to alleviate the cravings of his own family. When this was explained to the chief he turned away. 'No,' he said, 'if his people could not be relieved, he and his family would starve with them,' and he refused for those nearest and dearest to him the proffered succor until all could share

* "Wau-Bun," pg. 89.

† Same reference as above, pg. 484.

alike." During the winter of 1832-33 food was scarce at Fort Winnebago, and the Indians suffered severely.

Old Day-kau-ray delivered an address on education to the agent, Mr. Kinzie, at a conference held with the Winnebago chiefs in 1831, in regard to sending the children of the Indians away to school. The following quotation is from his speech * : "The white man does not live like the Indian; it is not his nature; neither does the Indian love to live like the white man. * * * * This is what we think. If we change our minds we will let you know."

The known sons of Old Dekaury were (1) Little Decorah and (2) Spoon Decorah.

Big Canoe, or *One-eyed Decorah*, a son of Chatpost-kaw-kah, told George Gale† about 1855 that he had but one brother, Waukon Decorah. One-eyed Decorah's Indian name was Wadge-hut-ta-kaw, or the Big Canoe. The signature, Watch-ha-ta-kaw, (by Henry M. Rice, his delegate) is attached to the treaty of Washington, October 13, 1846, and is undoubtedly that of One-eyed Decorah.

He was born about 1772, and was fifteen years of age when his father settled at La Crosse. He aided in the capture of Mackinaw, July 17, 1812, and was with the British in the attack on Fort Stephenson, August 2, 1813, near Fremont, Ohio, and with McKay at the capture of Prairie du Chien. It is said that he signed the treaty there in 1825. The act for which he became celebrated was the capture of Black Hawk and the Prophet, in 1832. Black Hawk's force was pursued by General Atkinson, who completely defeated him August 3, 1832. The famous Sauk leader and the Prophet escaped to the northward and

* Smithsonian Report, 1885, part 2, pg. 128.

† A Wisconsin pioneer who in 1851 removed to the copper Mississippi region, where he was judge, state senator, etc., founding the village of Galesville and the academy thereat. He wrote a history of the Winnebago Indians, which is still in manuscript form in the Wisconsin Historical Society's possession.

sought refuge among some Winnebagoes, whither they were followed and captured by One-eyed Decorah and Chaetar (another Winnebago), who delivered him to General Street (a former Winnebago agent) at Prairie du Chien, August 27, 1832. On this occasion One-eyed Decorah made the following speech :*

“My father, I now stand before you. When we parted I told you I would return soon, but I could not come any sooner. We had to go a great distance. You see we have done what you sent us to do. These (pointing to the prisoners) are the two you told us to get. We have done what you told us to do. We always do what you tell us, because we know it is for our good. Father, you told us to get these men, and it would be the cause of much good to the Winnebagoes. We have brought them, but it has been very hard for us to do so. That one (Black Hawk) was a great way off. You told us to bring them to you alive; we have done so. If you had told us to bring their heads alone, we would have done so, and it would have been less difficult than what we have done. We would not deliver them to our brother, the chief of the warriors, but to you, because we know you, and we believe you are our friend. We want you to keep them safe; if they are to be hurt, we do not wish to see it. Wait until we are gone before it is done. Father, many little birds have been flying about our ears of late, and we thought they whispered to us that there was evil intended for us; but now we hope these evil birds will let our ears alone. We know you are our friend because you took our part, and that is the reason we do what you tell us to do. You say you love your red children; we think we love you as much as, if not more than, you love us. We have confidence in you and you may rely on us. We have been promised a great deal if we would take these men—that it would do much good to our people. We now hope to see what

* “Red Men of Iowa,” pg. 160.

will be done for us. We have come in haste; we are tired and hungry. We now put these men into your hands. We have done all that you told us to do."

In 1832, One-eyed Decorah married two wives and went to live on the Black river, Wis. He had at least one son, Spoon Decorah. Chas. H. Saunders says. "One-eyed Decorah has one daughter, Mrs. Hester Lowery, still living in Wisconsin. Her Indian name is No-jin-win-ka. She is between eighty-five and ninety years old." One-eyed Decorah was living in Iowa between 1840 and 1848, as Moses Paquette, who went to the Presbyterian school at the Turkey river, says that he saw him while he was at school, and Decorah was then an old man. Big Canoe disliked to leave their Iowa reservation.

Geo. W. Kingsley says: "One-eyed Decorah or Big Canoe, after being driven around by the United States Government from the Turkey river reservation, Iowa, to Long Prairie in northern Minnesota, then back to Blue Earth, southern Minnesota, his family brought the old chief back to his native home and stamping grounds in Wisconsin. * * * * He requested his children not to bury him, but instead, to place him on top of the ground in a sitting position, and so it was done."

He lived for a number of years with his tribe on Decora's Prairie, Wis., which is named after him; there is also a bluff called Decora's Peak back from the Prairie which was also named after him. George Gale states: "The One-eyed Decorah, who is now [about 1864] about ninety years old, had his cheedah (or wigwam) and family during the summer of 1862 two miles west of Galesville, Wis., and a part of the summer of 1863 he was near New Lisbon." On both of these occasions Gale interviewed him on the traditions of his tribe and family. One-eyed Decorah (also written One-Eyed Decorah) died near the Tunnel, in Monroe county, not far from Tomah, Wis., in

August, 1864. A. R. Fulton says*: "While young he [One-eyed Decorah] had the misfortune to lose his right eye."

Some histories† contain the statement that, "One-eyed Decorah, a son of Waukon Decorah, was a drunkard and unworthy of his father;" there is no evidence, however, to show that he was more debauched than other chiefs, for nearly all Indians were more or less addicted to firewater. That he was a son of Waukon Decorah is an error, as One-eyed Decorah himself testifies that Waukon was his brother.

Wakun-ha-ga, or Snake Skin, a son of Chahpost-kaw-kah, was commonly known as Waukon Decorah, or Washington Decorah because in 1828 he went to Washington with the chiefs; he also visited Washington later. Waukon Decorah was a great council chief and orator of his tribe.

The following treaties were signed by him: August 19, 1825, Prairie des Chiens, Michigan Territory, as "Wan-ca-ha-ga, or snake's skin;" August 25, 1828, Green Bay, Michigan Territory, as "Wau-kaun-haw-kaw, or snake skin;" August 1, 1829, Prairie du Chien, Michigan Territory, as "Wau-kaun-hah-kaw, snake skin;" among those representing the Prairie du Chien deputation at Fort Armstrong, Rock Island, Ill., September 15, 1832, as "Wau-kaun-hah-kaw, or snake skin, (Day-kau-ray);" November 1, 1837, Washington, D. C., as "Wa-kaun-ha-kah, (Snake Skin)." In 1832, Mr. Burnett found him, with the principal part of his band from the Wisconsin and Kickapoo rivers, about sixty miles up the Mississippi from Prairie du Chien. This was during the Black Hawk war, at which time Waukon Decorah aided the whites. This chief belonged to the Mississippi river bands.

Mr. Saunders says, "Wakun-ha-ga had one son named 'Ma-he-ska-ga, or White Cloud;' he is buried here on this reser-

* "Red Men of Iowa," A. R. Fulton; "The Making of Iowa," Sabin.

† Same reference as above.

vation [Nebraska]. This man was known around Prairie du Chien and Lansing as John Waukon (there is a Charley Waukon who is now living at Lansing, Ia., but he is no relation to the Waukon Decorah family). John Waukon has one daughter, Mrs. Henry Big Fire, and two sons, Henry Smith ('Hunting Man') and John Smith ('Che-wy-scha-ka') still living. John Waukon was my father-in-law; my wife's name, by birth and number of female children, was Oc-see-ah-ho-no-nien-kaw. She died February 21, 1913."

Waukon Decorah's portrait (recently identified), painted by J. O. Lewis* at the Treaty of Prairie du Chien in 1825, is shown in Lewis' Aboriginal Portfolio. He is there called "Waa-kaun-see-kaa, or the Rattle Snake." Its chief distinction is a turban composed of a stuffed rattlesnake, wound around the head, on which are some feathers; a blanket is draped around the lower part of his form, while a bunch of hair (evidently horsehair) is thrown over his arm.

Waukon Decorah evidently had adopted for his badge a stuffed snake skin, so that by some he was called "snake skin," by others, "rattlesnake," the former term, according to historical data, being more commonly used. Thomas McKenney, later United States Indian Commissioner, gives a portrait of this chief in McKenney and Hall's "Indian Tribes," with a biography. Here he is called "Wa-kaun-ha-ka, a Winnebago Chief." In his biographic note McKenney speaks of "Wa-kaun-ha-ka" as a Decorah, moreover, he says that the subject was part French. The Wa-kaun-ha-ka of McKenney and the Waa-kaun-see-kaa of

* Mr. J. O. Lewis was employed by the Indian Department from 1823 to 1834 to make portraits of the Indians, which was in furtherance of the plan of Hon. J. A. Barbour, Secretary of War. He accompanied Governor Lewis Cass and Colonel H. L. McKenney in their western tours, 1819 and 1829, and was present at the several treaties made by these gentlemen with the Chippewas, Winnebagoes, Sioux, Pottawattamies, and others. One of the folios contained a letter from General Cass in September, 1835, to Mr. Lewis, confirming the correctness of his pictures and commending him to the public. The sketches made by Mr. Lewis were deposited in the Indian Office, War Department, at Washington, and many of them were afterwards copied, at two different times, for the work of McKenney and Hall.—Part 2, Smithsonian Report, 1885.

Lewis are portraits of the same person, and both coincide in the rattlesnake turban.

The variation in Indian names is not a formidable matter in identification. Mr. Lamere states that, "The literal translation of 'Wa-kaun-see-kaa' is 'the Yellow Snake.'" Mr. Saunders says: "At times of feasts or medicine dances Wa-kun-ha-ga wore on his head a cap [turban] made of yellow rattlesnake skins; the feathers denote bravery in battle." L. H. Bunnell mentions that the yellow rattlesnakes of the Mississippi bluffs were held as sacred by the Winnebagoes and Dakotas, who killed them only when a skin was required for a religious ceremony or dance.*

Miss Kellogg, research assistant to Reuben G. Thwaites†, reports as follows: "We can unhesitatingly affirm, that there is every probability that this is the well known Winnebago known as Waukon Decorah. * * * * I think there can be no doubt that Lewis's portrait is a genuine one, and correctly identified."

Several historians‡ of Iowa, it seems, have taken their accounts of Waukon Decorah from a statement originally made in the "Annals of Iowa," 1866, by Eliphalet Price of Elkader, Clayton county. This contains numerous errors. The Waukon Decorah described as a very small Indian is not the person of that name known to Wisconsin history. Price says,§ "He was usually called 'the Blind Decorah,' having lost his right eye;" he further states that the meaning of Waukon Decorah is "White Snake." In this he is also mistaken, as the previously given treaty signatures testify. Decorah is a corruption of the French surname De Carrie.

* Wisconsin Archeologist, Vol. 6, No. 3, pg. 134.

† Superintendent of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

‡ A. R. Fulton, "The Red Men of Iowa;" B. F. Gue, "History of Iowa," Vol. 1; Sabin in "The Making of Iowa" also gives the same account.

§ In his article entitled "Wakon Decorah," Annals of Iowa, 1866.



WAA-KAUN-SEE-KAA (*The Rattlesnake or Waukon-Decorah*)

From a painting by J. O. Lewis at the Treaty of Prairie du Chien, 1825

George W. Kingsley makes the following statements: "There was a *White Snake* also, but he was not a chief, although a very prominent Indian. He died in Houston county, Minnesota, about the time the Decorahs lived in Iowa, his remains were left in a sitting position on the point of a hill about one mile north of the village of Houston. White Snake lost a part of his family in a massacre on the Wapsipinicon river, Iowa, a few years after the Black Hawk war while on an elk hunt, by a band of Sauk and Fox Indians by mistake. White Snake was part Sauk."

The speech referred to and partly quoted in W. E. Alexander's History of Winneshiek and Allamakee counties, 1882, and credited to Waukon Decorah, is obviously connected with this incident. Evidently the speech was made by White Snake. He complained that his tribe had been firm friends of the whites, had aided them in the Black Hawk war, and because of this had incurred the enmity of the Sauks and Foxes, who first struck at his own family. He desired some token of remembrance for his services.

It is claimed by Alexander* that, "The name 'Wachon Decorah' is found translated in some places as the 'White Crow'; this is an error. There was a White Crow whose Indian name was Wa-haw-ska-kaw, also given as Kau-kich-ka-ka. He was a prominent Winnebago civil chief and orator and died about the year 1834 in Wisconsin, and was buried there. Spoon Decorah, a son of Old Gray-headed Decorah, stated that White Crow was a one-eyed chief.

Eliphalet Price took the census of 1850 and is credited by the Day family (who were some of the first white settlers in Winneshiek county) with suggesting Decorah as a very proper

* In his History of Winneshiek and Allamakee counties.

name for the town site that they had in mind to plat.[†] In the act of organizing the county (1851) Decorah is herein first named, two and a half years before the town plat was recorded. The district represented by Hon. Eliphalet Price consisted of Clayton, Fayette, Allamakee, and Winneshiek counties. John Day made the remark* that Decorah "was a small Indian about five feet in height."

Mr. Price and Mr. Day were probably misled in their identification of this chief, as there were other Winnebagoes whose names began with Waukon. Apparently, they were familiar with the name Waukon Decorah, and had this in mind when it came to selecting a name for the new town. Mr. Price in his article relates that, "Soon after the removal of the Winnebagoes from the Wisconsin to the Neutral Ground in Iowa, Decorah and his band took up their residence on the Iowa river near the present site of the town that bears his name, in the county of Winneshiek." Antoine Grignon states: "Wakun-ha-ga [Waukon Decorah] was camped on the Iowa river [Upper Iowa] when I knew him. * * * * He did not remain in that section long." Mr. Saunders says, "Wakun-ha-ga, and his band, also had a village at or near Waukon, Ia., where they went in the summer, and raised corn and squash, and picked berries for winter use."

In a statement made by Col. C. A. Clark in "Annals of Iowa," 1903, he remarks that, "The name of the city of Decorah evidently comes from *Little Decorah*." This is very improbable, as there is nothing which corroborates it. Old Waukon lived a generation or two before Little Decorah, and was a distinguished chief, while it appears that the latter was of lesser note.

It is evident, therefore, that our county seat is named in honor of the venerable Waukon Decorah. Alexander states,

[†] From a paper prepared by A. K. Bailey for deposit in the corner stone of the new Court House.

* In Alexander's History of Winneshiek and Allamakee counties.

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front of the Court House was completed, the remains were re-interred. They were placed in the Court House Square, where they lay undisturbed for about seventeen years. But the grading and terracing of these grounds and the building of the new stone wall compelled another re-interrment in the summer of 1876. The bones were taken out and placed in a box to be buried again inside the new stone wall.

When the remains were first exhumed in 1859, the skull had black hair; this assertion is corroborated in a statement made by R. F. Gibson, January 27, 1913, to the writer of this article. Mr. Gibson was one of a committee of three appointed to take charge of the remains.

Waukon Decorah was at this time living in Minnesota with his people; this fact has been established beyond question. It is stated in Alexander's history that even prominent participants in the first exhumation of the alleged remains of Decorah were confused with doubts, by rumors, current at the time, to the effect that Decorah was still living. He died at the Blue Earth agency, southern Minnesota, in 1868, and was buried there. Mr. Lamere says, "He was about ninety-three years old when he died, and it is said that his hair was as white as it could be." This is practically conclusive proof that the death of Waukon Decorah did not occur here, and that his remains are not buried in the Court House Square.

Little Decorah was the oldest son of Old Gray-headed Decorah. His Winnebago name is given as "Maw-hee-coo-shay-naw-zhe-kaw," which Mr. Kingsley interprets as "The pillar that reaches the clouds." The following treaties were signed by Little Decorah: November 1, 1837, Washington, D. C., as "Ma-hee-koo-shay-nuz-he-kah, (Young Decori);" October 13, 1846, Washington, as "Maw-hee-ko-shay-naw-zhee-kaw;" February 27, 1855, Washington, as "Maw-he-coo-shaw-naw-zhe-

kaw, "one that Stands and Reaches the Skies, or Little Decorie;" April 15, 1859, Washington, as "Little De Corrie;" March 1, 1865, Washington, as "Little Dacoria." It is probable that "Little Decorah" is simply another term for Decorah, Junior.

This chief established a village on the Iowa river (Upper Iowa) in 1840, and it is thought that he was about forty years old while here. Antoine Grignon, who was acquainted with him, says, "Little Decorah spent very little time in Iowa—but lived mostly in the region of Portage, Wis." He belonged to the Mississippi river bands of Indians. Waukon Decorah and Little Decorah had separate camps on the Upper Iowa river.

Little Decorah was of medium height, five feet, eight or ten inches, and was chunky and fleshy. It is said that he was slow of action and speech, but possessed a mild and kind disposition and was very sensible. He belonged to the Cloud clan. Little Decorah died near Tomah, Wis., April 1, 1887, about 100 years old.

Spoon Decorah was a son of Old Gray-headed Decorah. (It will be remembered that Old Decorah had a brother Choukeka, also called Spoon Decorah). Spoon Decorah was born at his father's village near the mouth of the Baraboo river, Wisconsin. In March, 1887, Dr. Reuben G. Thwaites had an interview with him. He was then "living with his aged squaw," whose name, it is said, was Gray Eagle-eye. "His progeny, reaching to the fourth generation, were clustered about the patriarchal lodge in family wigwams." He could only converse in his native tongue. He related, "In 1840, we were all moved to the Turkey river [Iowa]; but in the spring our party went to Iowa [Upper] river, where Little Decorah had a village. We went down soon afterwards to the Turkey river to get our ammunition, but for some reason—perhaps because we had moved to Iowa river without the consent of the agent—we couldn't get

any.”* He then went back to Wisconsin, where he died October 13, 1889, in a cranberry marsh, near Necedah. It is said that he was about eighty-four years old when he died.†

Spoon Decorah, a cousin of the Spoon Decorah interviewed by Dr. Thwaites in 1887, was a son of One-eyed Decorah. In regard to him we have no further information.

Angel De Cora—known in private life as Mrs. William Deitz—is the daughter of a descendant of the hereditary chief of the Winnebagoes. The name “Angel” came about through an accident; its bearer was carried, while a baby, to a young kinswoman, who, being asked to choose a “Christian name,” opened a Bible at random, and the first word which caught her eye was “angel.” Her Indian name, which means “Queen of the Clouds,” identifies her with the Thunder-bird clan. Angel De Cora—Deitz states: “Wakan [Waukon Decorah] was a generation or two before Maw-he-coo-shaw-naw-zhe-ka [Little Decorah]. The latter was my grandfather.”

Her education began, while very young, when she was carried off to Hampton, Va. A strange white man appeared on the reservation and asked her, through an interpreter, if she would like to ride on a steam car; with six other children she decided to try it, and when the ride was ended she found herself in Hampton. “Three years later, when I returned to my mother,” says Angel De Cora‡, “she told me that for months she wept and mourned for me. My father and the old chief and his wife had died, and with them the old Indian life was gone.” She then returned to Hampton, where, through the efforts of a kind family who gave her employment, she was enabled to work her way through a local preparatory school for girls, and later the art department of Smith College, Northampton, Mass.§

* Wisconsin Historical Collections.

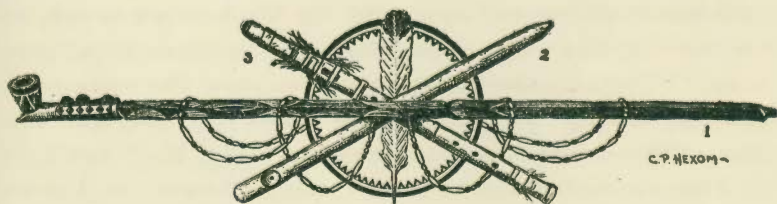
† Same reference as above.

‡ The Literary Digest, January 27, 1912, pg. 161.

§ Same reference as above.

Her husband's name is Wicarhpi Isnala, or Lone Star ; he is one-quarter Sioux and the rest German. Both are now teaching art at the Carlisle Indian School, her husband having also studied art and become an artist of some note. Angel De Cora has been under the art instruction of such men as Howard Pyle, Frank Brown, Joseph De Camp, and Edmund Tarbell. She has won distinction in her work. In 1904 her husband, Lone Star, supervised the interior and mural decorations of the Indian exhibit at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. It was while in St. Louis that he became acquainted with Angel De Cora.*

Roger C. Mackenstadt, whose boyhood was spent in the city of Decorah, where his parents still reside, says, "Our best policeman, and one of my intimate friends, was Peter Decorah, a grandson of Chief Wakan Decorah. * * * * In the whole tribe I would say that fifty are named Decorah. They drop the H. There are several Waukons, about ten, and twenty Winneshieks. The Winneshieks and Waukons are all Wisconsin Winnebagoes and about half of the Decoras are Wisconsin." Mr. Mackenstadt having received a promotion, is now stationed at the Uintah and Ouray Agency, Utah.



1. Peace pipe presented by Old Gray-Headed Decorah to Maj. Zachary Taylor.

2. Chief Winneshiek's pipe (after suggestion furnished by Oliver Lamere.)

3. Winnebago courting flute, known on the frontier as the deerskin flute, after Geo. Catlin.

* From an article in The Literary Digest, January 27, 1912, pg. 161.

CHIEF WINNESHIEK

And though the warrior's sun has set,
Its light shall linger round us yet.—

—Translation from the Spanish by H. W. Longfellow.

Winneshiek, who seems to be a somewhat shadowy character, was a notable chief of the Winnebagoes. It appears that there was a family, like the Decorah family, that took that name. The name Winneshiek is evidently not a Winnebago name, but an Algonquian (that is, Fox) name, and is properly Winnishig^a and signifies "a dirty person who is lying down." He was commonly known by his Fox name. In his own language he was called "Wa-kon-ja-goo-gah," meaning "Coming Thunder;" he was also called "We-lou-shi-ga," meaning "ties them up," or "has them tied up." It is also said that his name in his own language was "Maun-wau-kon-kaw;" *regarding the last two names Little Winneshiek says, "I understand that this name [We-lou-shi-ga] is a Sioux word for Wa-kon-ja-goo-gah, or Coming Thunder. The name, Maun-wau-kon-kaw, is unknown to us." The following treaty signatures show the name to be variously written: August 25, 1828, Green Bay, Michigan Territory, "Wee-no-shee-kaw;" February 27, 1855, Washington, D. C., "Wau-kon-chaw-koo-haw, the Coming Thunder, or Win-no-shik," (the first Indian to sign the treaty.)

From A. R. Fulton, in "Red Men of Iowa," we learn that, "He was promoted to the rank of a chief when quite young, and always maintained popularity among his people. * * * * Both physically and intellectually he was a remarkably fine speci-

* Wisconsin Historical Collections.

men of his race. * * * * As a man he was modest, kind, and courteous; as a chief, dignified, firm and just in the exercise of his authority. * * * * Winneshiek was made head chief of the tribe in 1845 [at the Turkey river, Iowa], an appointment that did not affect his position as chief of his own particular band." Alexander states*: "He was made chief by order of the United States War Department, on account of his ability and fitness for the position. Under him as head chief, there were several chiefs of respective bands into which the tribe was divided." When the tribe was removed to Long Prairie, Minn., Winneshiek was the head chief, and in 1857, when they were at Blue Earth, he was called a worthy chief and ruler of his tribe.†

Old chief Winneshiek was an intelligent and very kind man, and had perfect control over his people. He belonged to the Thunder clan, and was a member of the Upper phratry. Mr. Lamere says: "He is said to have been of medium size, had black mustache and chin whiskers. He was very handsome, and it is said that he always wore goggles, or dark glasses. He always carried a pipe, which was made out of a round stick about a foot and a half long with the stem hole bored through it, and the bowl bored into the other end; he carried this most all the time, and especially at council meetings would he have it with him."

Mr. Kingsley says: "We-no-shee-kah was strictly a pagan; he did not believe in the white man's way, therefore his band of followers, which consisted of about one-half or two-thirds of the tribe, were known as blanket Indians. He was a very shrewd, wise, and stubborn man, but free-hearted to everybody; no person ever left or entered the chief's great lodge without receiving

* In his History of Winneshiek and Allamakee Counties. There is no further authentic mention regarding this statement.

† Wisconsin Archeologist, Vol. 6, No. 3, pg. 156.

something to eat. These were his teachings; he regarded all the Winnebagoes as his children and treated them as such. We-no-shee-kah was no orator, therefore in council with the government, or otherwise, he always had a speaker. He was no traveler, although he made a trip or two to see his Great Father at Washington, President Polk, who, as a token of friendship, gave We-no-shee-kah a medal; struck on the reverse side were two hands clasped, an Indian's in that of a white man's [regarding this medal see statement by Little Winneshiek]. Chief We-no-shee-kah was a great father as well as a head chief. He had four wives, who, with himself and family, lived in one lodge. His principal home was about seven miles west of the village of Houston, on the Root river, Houston county, Minnesota; here he lived, during the winter, in a dirt wigwam." Fulton states*: "He had four wives, one of whom was the reputed daughter of Colonel Morgan, a former officer in the United States army;" there is no further authentic mention which corroborates this statement by Fulton.

That Winneshiek also had a camp on the Upper Iowa river is evident, as Antoine Grignon says, "While he [Winneshiek] was camped on the Iowa river my brother Paul and one James Reed visited his band to find out about some cattle the young Winnebagoes had stolen from the Sioux. They were given in compensation an equal amount of cattle, or a number corresponding to the number that had been stolen, and Winneshiek warned his band not to molest the cattle as they were being driven out, as the young men were making preparations to stampede the herd by waving red blankets in front of them."

P. V. Lawson, a Wisconsin historian, says†: "The Indians in a drunken pow-wow at Prairie du Chien had killed his

* "Red Men of Iowa," pg. 158.

† Wisconsin Archeologist, Vol. 6, No. 3, pg. 156; taken from Wisconsin Historical Collections 3, 287.

brother. Word of this tragedy being sent to him, he coolly loaded his pistol, and with it concealed beneath his blanket, went to the place where his brother lay. He had the murderer brought beside his victim and then suddenly shot him dead;† there is no further mention made of this incident. It is stated,† however, that Winneshiek was in 1829 head chief of the Winnebago village at La Crosse.

He was on the British side in 1812-15, and in 1832 refused to assist the Americans against the Sauks. When invited by the whites to join them, the matter was discussed with the chiefs and braves. "Win-o-she-kaw was opposed to the measure, and declined having anything to do with it. He said the Sauks had twice that season presented the red wampum to the Winnebagoes at Portage, and that they had as often washed it white and handed it back to them; further, that he did not like that red thing; that he was afraid of it. Waudgh-ha-ta-kau [evidently the One-eyed Decorah] took the wampum, and said that he with all the young men of the village would go; that they were anxious to engage in the expedition and would be ready to accompany us on our return."* A short while after this it was found that Winneshiek and Wau-mar-nar-sar had gone up the river with part of the band to hunt and dry meat.

His mother was a sister of Wabokieshiek (White Cloud), the half-Sauk, half-Winnebago Prophet, who assisted Black Hawk. Little Winneshiek says, "For this relationship he fought in a number of battles under Black Hawk in the war of 1832." Thomas Clay, an aged Winnebago, heard Winneshiek tell this from time to time at *death-wakes*, where the brave men, or warriors, were supposed to tell the truth. Clay's statement‡ is as follows:

† Wisconsin Archeologist, Vol. 6, No. 3, pg. 156; taken from Wisconsin Historical Collection 3, 287.

* Wisconsin Historical Collections, 2,—257, 256.

‡ As given by Mr. Oliver Lamere.

"Winneshiek was a nephew of a Sauk and Fox Indian called White Cloud [Wabokieshiek], that is why Winneshiek was an aid to the Sauk and Fox Indians during Black Hawk's war. Winneshiek was taking, or guiding, the Fox Indians into the Winnebago country, or to the village, and as they were crossing the Mississippi river somewhere near where Prairie du Chien now stands, a steamboat came up the river and anchored in the middle of the stream. Then some one called out from the boat and asked if Black Hawk was there among them. 'Yes,' was the answer from the Indians. 'Will he surrender or not?' was the next question from the boat. Then Winneshiek spoke up, and said: 'Uncles (meaning the Fox Indians, as that was what he always called them), tie a white cloth to a pole and I will go and surrender.' So they made a white flag for him, but as he was about to get into the stream to swim to the boat, the Fox people said: 'Perhaps after all you had better not go,' and saying thus, they held him; and the soldiers in the boat could see that he was being held. Then Winneshiek said: 'Uncles, I meant to do this that you might live, but the result shall be your fault.' Just then the question came again from the boat, 'Will you surrender?' The answer from the Indians was 'No! we will not surrender,' and no sooner was it said than the soldiers fired upon them, and even at the first volley many of the Indians were killed. Then Winneshiek said: 'Uncles, thus far only, am I able to be with you, as I shall leave you here,' and saying thus, he and his real uncles went up the bank of the river and there watched the fight. When night came upon them, he took his Fox uncles back to the Winnebago village with him. When they arrived at the village, Winneshiek's mother met him, crying: "Oh! my son, because you have aided Black Hawk in the war, they have taken your father to the fort as a prisoner.' When the soldiers learned that Winneshiek was back at his own village they came after him and released his father. Winneshiek

was questioned very severely, but he was angered instead of frightened, and he would not even speak, and for four days he would not eat the food that was given him. Then one of the officers said to his fellow officers: 'You must be very severe in questioning Winneshiek. I will question him myself, to-day.' So the officer went to him and as he entered he called Winneshiek by name, greeting him and shaking hands with him, he said: 'Winneshiek, I understand that some officers have questioned you, but that you were angered and would not even speak to them, and I told them that they must have acted very ungentlemanly towards you to cause you to act as you did.' Winneshiek said: 'Yes, that is the way they have acted.' 'That is what I thought,' said the officer, and continued. 'Winneshiek, I am going to talk with you with good words,' and Winneshiek assented; so the officer said: 'Winneshiek, as you have been spoken to roughly, which caused you to not eat for four days, and as I am going to speak to you with good words, therefore I desire that you should eat before we talk and I will have cooked for you a very nice dog that I own myself, and at noon, after you have had your noon meal, then we shall talk.' Then the officer got some Indians that were about the fort to cook the dog for him in the way they usually cook them for themselves. So when it was thus served to Winneshiek and he had partaken of it, then he and the officer talked. The officer was very much pleased that Winneshiek talked with him in a good spirit. Then he said: 'Winneshiek, I am going to ask you a question and I would like to have you tell me the truth;' Winneshiek assented. The officer asked: 'Were you with the Foxes in the war?' Winneshiek said: 'Yes,' and the officer asked again: 'Did you take part?' Winneshiek said: 'As you have asked me for the truth, I will tell it to you,—yes, I took part.' Then the officer said: 'Winneshiek, I thank you because I asked you for the truth and you gave it to me.' Then the officer did not question him any-

more, but left. Winneshiek was kept in prison one year for being an aid to Black Hawk."

Kingsley says: "We-no-shee-kah and his band after being moved about from one reservation to another were finally removed from Blue Earth, Minnesota, to Usher's Landing, or Fort Thompson, S. D. Here a part of the band starved to death and others died of exposure. He took the remnant of his band and started down the Missouri river in canoes, in hopes of going to St. Louis, and hence up the Mississippi to his native haunts in Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota; but the old chief got as far down as St. Joseph, Mo., and there winter overtook him and his little band. The old chief took sick and died very suddenly." At this time the old chief evidently was on the Kansas side of the Missouri, as Mr. Lamere says: "He died in Kansas, or just across the southern line of Nebraska among the Iowa Indians." One wife and the family came through the next summer. Little Winneshiek, a son of the old chief, says: "My father traveled extensively in the interest of the tribe, he with other chiefs were in Washington on two occasions for the purpose of ceding large areas of land at each time to the Federal Government;" he further says: "Your county was named in honor of my father, Chief Winneshiek, who was considered the head of the Winnebago tribe at the time they were occupying the Turkey river district in Iowa. Ours was the family to which Geo. Kingsley referred to as moving to Wisconsin after my father's death."

No one knows who gave the county its name; this, like certain other things concerning the earliest history of the county, has apparently never been recorded. At an old settlers' meeting held in Decorah, July 4, 1876, Mr. A. K. Bailey delivered an address in which it was strongly intimated that this might have been the work of Hon. Eliphalet Price. Alexander accepted this as good enough history and gives it as such in his history of the county. However, Mr. A. K. Bailey corrects this by a later

article* in which he states: "The very recent discovery that the county was named legally [February 27, 1847], and its boundaries described, more than four years before the organizing act [1851] was passed (which has until now [1903] been considered as the beginning of county existence), makes this credit to Mr. Price improbable."

Young Winneshiek, or *Winneshiek the Younger*, so-called in history, was a younger brother of old chief Winneshiek, or Coming Thunder. It is stated† that he was a son of the old chief, but this is an error and does not refer to his son Little Winneshiek who says, "Young Winneshiek was named Ah-hoo-sheeb-gah, or Short Wing, by his fellow tribesmen; he was a younger brother of my father and did not participate in the Sauk and Fox war [1832]." It is said‡ that during the so-called Winnebago war, in 1827, Young Winneshiek was held as a hostage by Colonel Dodge for the good behavior of the tribe. This statement is made by several historians§ in which connection they also mention him as taking part in the Black Hawk war, 1832; Mr. Clay's narrative refers to chief Winneshiek, an older brother of Young Winneshiek. Little Winneshiek's statement (as given above) confirms Mr. Clay's narration. It is stated in Alexander's history that Winneshiek was a noted orator. Obviously, this refers to Young Winneshiek, for in the Report of the Indian agent for 1840‡, there is a speech made by Young Winneshiek, in which he refers to himself as "a boy," protesting against the removal to Iowa. Kingsley testifies that old chief Winneshiek (Coming Thunder) was "no orator."

* From a paper prepared by A. K. Bailey, for deposit in the corner stone of the new Court House, and republished in the "Illustrated Historical Atlas of Winneshiek County," Sec. II, pg. 3.

† Wisconsin Historical Collections, 2,—331.

‡ Wisconsin Historical Collections, 2,—331.

§ Fulton, Gue, and Sabin; the latter two, it seems, have taken their accounts from Fulton. They were probably under wrong impressions in reference to "Young Winneshiek" as their statements (according to historical data) seem to apply to more than one person.

‡ Wisconsin Historical collections.

Antoine Grignon says, "Young Winneshiek was a bright young man. He died rather young, at Black River Falls, Wis." When the Winnebagoes were being removed from Blue Earth, the chiefs Decorah and Winneshiek (evidently One-eyed Decorah and Young Winneshiek) fled with their families and other members of the tribe to Wisconsin. Young Winneshiek had a village on the Black River and died there in May, 1887.

No-gin-kah (meaning, Striking Tree and Younger Winneshiek) is the youngest son of Chief Winneshiek, or Coming Thunder. He is seventy years old and is still living in Wisconsin. He is more commonly known as Little Winneshiek. No-gin-kah says, "John Winneshiek and I are the only sons of Chief Winneshiek living and his other descendants produced by our deceased brothers and sisters diverge into a very large family." He further states that, "The medals issued to Winnebago chiefs by the United States Government are lost, the one described by Geo. W. Kingsley was lost by one of my elder brothers. I have only one medal in my possession, on which is engraved King George the 3d and Latin inscriptions [this medal, (with the exception of a slight variation in size) conforms to a description of the one issued by the British military authorities in 1778]."

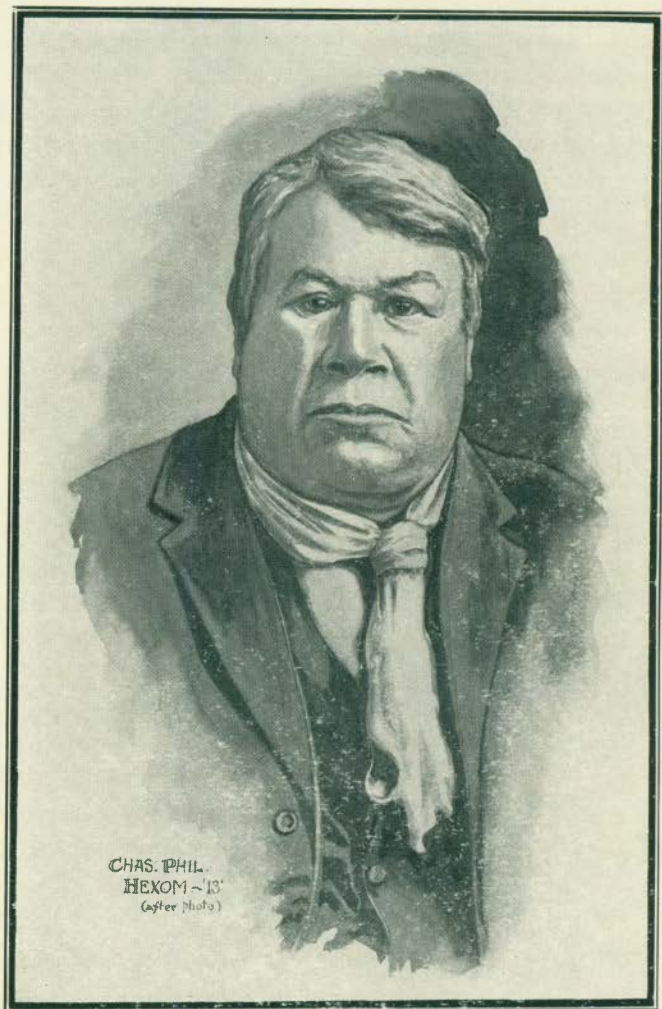
John Winneshiek's Indian name is *Ko-sho-gi-way-ka*, meaning "One that goes low;" he is seventy-eight years old.

Old chief Winneshiek's Indian name is given by some historians* as *Wa-kun-cha-koo-kah*, but this is evidently an error. *Wa-kun-cha-koo-kah*† is the Indian name of chief Yellow Thunder, who migrated with his tribe to Iowa. Yellow Thunder did not remain long at the Turkey river, for within a year he and his wife (known in history as "the Washington woman")‡ returned to Wisconsin; here he entered a tract of forty acres as a home-

* Fulton, "Red Men of Iowa;" Gue, "History of Iowa," Vol. 1; Sabin, "The Making of Iowa."

† Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 30, pt. 2, pg. 996.

‡ Wisconsin Archeologist, Vol. 6, No. 3, pg. 150.



NO-GIN-KAH (*Striking Tree or Little Winneshiek*)

stead on the west side of the Wisconsin river. He died in February, 1874. Yellow Thunder was greatly respected by his people, and was an able counsellor in their public affairs.

Other Winnebago chiefs known to have been in the county were Whirling Thunder (Wau-kaun-ween-kaw), Little Hill (Shogee-nik-ka) who, at Long Prairie, became head spokesman for the chiefs; Big Bear, and Kayrah-mau-nee, a son of Carrymaunee (or Nawkaw).

MISSION SCHOOL AND TRADING POST

By the treaty of September 15, 1832, it was stipulated that the government should annually, beginning in September, 1833, and continuing for twenty-seven years, give the Winnebagoes \$10,000 in specie, and establish a school among them, at or near Prairie du Chien, with a farm and garden, and provide other facilities, not to exceed in cost \$3,000 a year, for the education of their children, and continue the same for twenty-seven successive years. Six agriculturists, twelve yoke of oxen and as many plows, and other farming tools were to be supplied by the government. The buildings were erected in 1833, on the Yellow river, Allamakee county, Iowa, and President Jackson appointed Rev. David Lowry, a Presbyterian minister, to assume charge. The mission school was removed in 1840, from the Yellow river to a point on the Turkey river, in Winneshiek county, about four miles southeast of the fort buildings.

The erection of the mission was superintended by Rev. Lowry. There were about twenty buildings at the mission. One was a large school house, another a small church, while the rest were dwellings. Early Catholic pioneers, who settled near the Turkey river (1849), purchased these buildings. The small church was used as a chapel, hence the name Old Mission. In 1853 it was destroyed by fire.

There was also a mission one mile east of the fort, on the Turkey river, established by Catholic missionaries. Here there were a number of graves, and at the head of each was a cross. It is unknown whether any of the graves were those of converted

Indians or not. The buildings belonging to this mission were burned down by a prairie fire in the early fifties.

Alexander states * that, "Rev. Lowry's assistant was one by the name of Col. Thomas. To him was turned over the work of instructing the Indians in agricultural pursuits. The first year, under Col. Thomas' supervision, a farm of 300 acres was opened. However, little work could be got out of them, and the crops planted began to show neglect." There was an abundance of game in the country round about, and therefore the temptation for the Indian to roam and hunt was very strong. As a result he became negligent about tilling the soil. In 1843 Col. Thomas, under governmental instructions, built the first grist mill in Winneshiek county. The mission and farm was continued until the reservation was sold to the government. Lowry finally resigned to take charge of a mission in Minnesota and, in 1846, Mr. Fletcher was appointed agent for the Winnebagoes by President Polk, and served in that capacity for eleven years. During that time he resided at Fort Atkinson, Iowa, Long Prairie, Minn., and Blue Earth, Minn. Under the careful management of Mr. Fletcher the Winnebagoes attained to considerable proficiency in agriculture, and otherwise improved their condition.

During his service as Indian agent Mr. Fletcher was accompanied by his wife, who engaged earnestly in the work of teaching the Indians. Their eldest son, Frank Fletcher, acquired such command of the language of the Indians that he became his father's interpreter. General Fletcher, while serving as agent, contributed through the publications of Mr. Schoolcraft a vast amount of information concerning the religion, traditions, and customs of the Winnebagoes while at the Turkey river. In 1858 Mr. Fletcher returned to Iowa, where he died April 6, 1872, on his farm near Muscatine, sixty-six years old.

* In his History of Winneshiek and Allamakee Counties.

When the crop, planted under Col. Thomas' supervision, began to show neglect, a force of garrison men were detailed to cultivate it, and were paid for their labor out of the Indian annuity. Hon. A. Jacobson states*: "Ole Halvorsen Valle, undoubtedly the first Norwegian to visit the county, was engaged in the service of the government as teamster, hauling provisions from Fort Crawford, Wis., to Fort Atkinson and the Old Mission; he was also employed in breaking up pieces of bottom land on the Upper Iowa river. One of the largest fields thus prepared for the Indians to plant their corn was situated just below the outlet of Trout Run." Mr. Goddard says, "An Indian chief had a farm about one-half mile southwest of Spillville, and a considerable part of the ground was broken up."

An Indian trading post was established two miles southwest of the fort by a Mr. Olmstead and one Joseph Hewitt. It seems that they had a permit from the government to trade with the Indians. The buildings, all one story high, were constructed of logs. There were five in number, two large dwelling houses, one large store, one storage house, and a blacksmith shop. Capt. Joseph Hewitt's principal occupation was hunting, trapping, and fishing. In 1851 he left the country and located at Clear Lake, Ia., where he experienced no little trouble with the Sioux Indians. In 1849 Josiah Goddard bought the old Indian trading post from Olmstead, and in 1850 moved his family on to the land. Three or four acres of this land had been broken up by the Indians.

* In his article "Reminiscences of Pioneer Norwegians," published in the Historical Atlas of Winneshiek County, 1905, Sec. II, pg. 11.

FORT ATKINSON

Now, the boys in blue, you bet,
Earn whatever praise they get.—

—Joseph Mills Hanson, "Frontier Ballads."

In 1840 the Winnebago Indians were removed to their new home on the Neutral Ground. In order to protect them from the incursions of their neighbors, among whom were the Sauk and Fox tribes, as well as from intrusions of the whites, and in turn to prevent them from trespassing beyond the limits of the reservation, soldiers were stationed among them. A detachment of the 5th Infantry (Company F) under command of Captain Isaac Lynde left Fort Crawford, with a complement of eighty-two officers and enlisted men, and went into camp, May 31, 1840, in the neighborhood of Spring creek (now known as Goddard's creek) on the Turkey river. The camp was named "Camp Atkinson" in honor of Brigadier General Henry Atkinson, U. S. Army, the Department Commander who was so prominent in military operations in the upper Mississippi valley. Barracks and quarters sufficient to accommodate one company were erected, and in March, 1841, the Secretary of War ordered that the station be known as Fort Atkinson.

Rumors of the warlike attitude of a portion of the Sauk and Fox Indians, who, it was believed, intended sending out a party against the peaceable Winnebagoes, caused Governor Dodge of Wisconsin, in a letter dated January 23, 1841, and directed to the Commissioner of Indian affairs, to urge strongly that, in addition to the garrison there at that time, a mounted force be sta-

tioned at Fort Atkinson. The following is an extract from Governor Dodge's letter:—

“In compliance with the instructions of your Department the Agency and School have been removed to the new site on Turkey river with about 700 of the Indians of the Winnebago Nation. These Indians, it is confidently expected, will not return, unless another blow should be struck by the Sauks and Foxes. Such an event may not be looked for this winter, but it is the opinion of Mr. Lowry that it may certainly be calculated upon in the ensuing spring unless a mounted force should be stationed at Camp Atkinson.

“Information was received by Mr. Lowry through Governor Lucas, obtained from a portion of the Sauks and Foxes not unfriendly to the Winnebagoes, that a war party was to have set out against the latter in November last. A very extraordinary snow storm is believed to have prevented this attack. The war party is now on Red Cedar (fifty miles west of Camp Atkinson); a large body of Sioux are also in that vicinity, and scouts of the former have been fired at by the latter but as yet no blood has been shed. The difficulty of keeping the Winnebagoes at their new homes, under these circumstances, and without an adequate force for their protection, must be readily seen.”

This letter was referred to the War Department, where it was in turn referred to General Atkinson with instructions to use every effort to prevent any collision between the Indians. General Atkinson responded to these instructions March 1, 1841, as follows:—

“Sir: I have the honor to report, that I have received your letter of instructions of the 15th ultimo, accompanied by an extract of a letter from Governor Dodge of the 23d of January, in reference to establishing a mounted force at Fort Atkinson for the protection of the Winnebago Indians. It is impossible to station a mounted force at that point before the middle of May, as there are no barracks, quarters or stables for their accommo-

dation, nor forage for their horses. I will, however, order the troop at Fort Crawford to make excursions through the country of Turkey and Cedar Rivers, till the season opens to enable it to go under tents, at which time the grass will be grown sufficiently to subsist the horses.

"No time should be lost by the Quartermaster's Department in proceeding to erect quarters, barracks, and stables for the troop at the post on Turkey River, or they will not be ready for their accommodation by the coming of the next winter. I request, therefore, that orders to that effect may be given without delay.

"With great respect, Sir, your most obedient servant,

(Signed.)

H. ATKINSON,

Brigadier General U. S. Army.

Brigadier General Jones,

Adjutant General U. S. Army, Washington."

On the 24th of the following June, Company B of the 1st Dragoons arrived at the fort and took up their station, and from that time until 1847 the fort was a two-company post. September 11th Captain Lynde's company was relieved by Company K of the 1st Infantry, Captain J. J. Abercrombie.

In the year following, at various times, on the requisition of Governor Chambers of Iowa Territory, detachments and patrols were sent out from this fort to remove squatters and other intruders from the lands of the Sauk and Fox Indians and to prevent their return. August 7th Company I, 1st Dragoons, under Command of Captain James Allen, arriving at the fort, whence they proceeded to the Sauk and Fox Agency, where they established Fort Sanford. From this time until its abandonment Fort Atkinson was successively garrisoned by the following organizations:

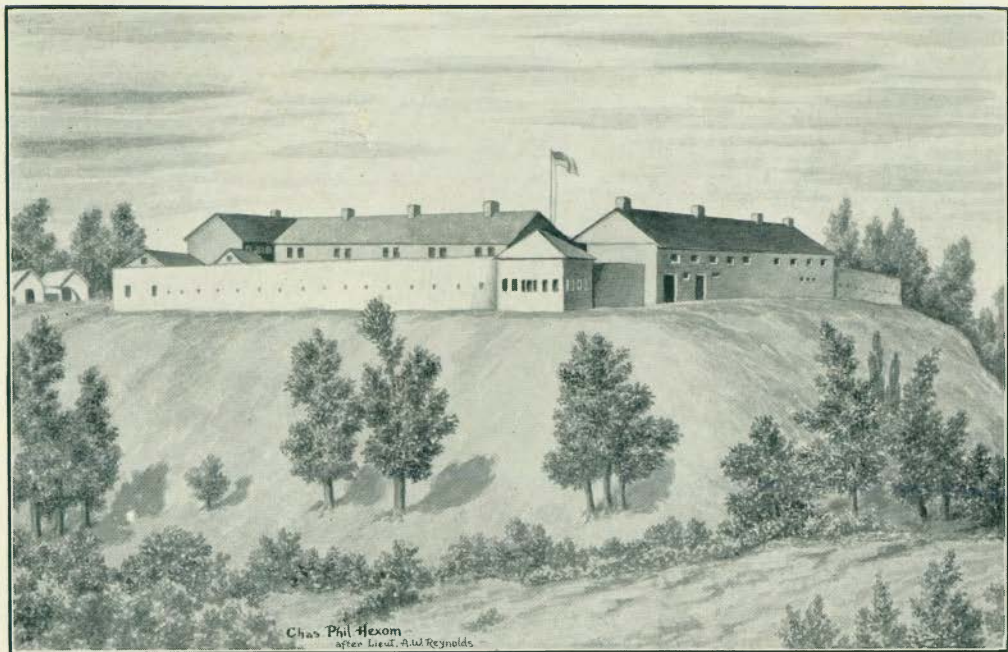
Company B, 1st Infantry, Captain Sidney Burbank; Company A, 1st Infantry, Captain Osborne Cross; Company E, 1st Infantry, Captain A. S. Miller; Company A, 1st Iowa Volunteer

Infantry, Captain James M. Morgan; Company A, 1st Iowa Volunteer Dragoons, Captain John Parker; a detachment of Wisconsin Volunteers, Dodge Guards, under command of Lieutenant Benjamin Fox; (here was an interim of several months during which the Fort was not garrisoned;) and from September 25, 1848, until the time of its abandonment, Company C, 6th Infantry, Captain F. L. Alexander.*

The fort was situated in the northwestern part of Washington township (on the old military road constructed from Fort Snelling to Fort Gibson) and stood on a rock-ribbed hill overlooking the site of the town which now bears its name. This hill is about eighty-four feet above the Turkey river. The fort buildings were two stories high, twenty feet to the eaves. Each building had an upper porch along its entire length, the one on the officers' quarters being screened in with the old fashioned movable wooden blinds. The buildings occupied an acre of ground. The stables, about 40 feet wide and about 300 feet long, extended north and south and were about 20 rods east of the street. The bakery, and the blacksmith shop and carpenter shops were north of the fort on the north side of the street.

The main barracks consisted of the commissioned officers' quarters, built of stone, the non-commissioned officers' quarters, built of logs hewn flat, one soldiers' quarters (including hospital rooms), built of stone, and another soldiers' quarters (including church and school rooms), built of flat hewn logs. The soldiers' quarters were 250 feet long. These four main buildings enclosed a parade- and drill-ground (with a flag-staff at one end), and in turn were enclosed by a stockade twelve feet high and made out of logs hewn flat and set on end in a narrow trench. The top of the stockade consisted of spikes driven into the sharpened ends of the logs. Port holes were cut at about every four feet.

* War Department Records of Fort Atkinson in "Annals of Iowa," July, 1900, Vol. IV, No. 6.



FORT ATKINSON, WINNESHIEK COUNTY, IOWA, AS IT APPEARED IN 1842

After a reproduction from an original drawing made by Lieut. A. W. Reynolds, 1st Infantry, on file in the office of the Adjutant General of the Army, War Department, Washington, D. C.

In two corners of the stockade were located cannon-houses; and in the other two corners, the Quartermasters' store house (adjoined by the sutler's store) and the magazine, or powder-house. The guard-house was near the sutler's store, and a sentinel's beat was constructed near the powder-house. The platform of the sentinel's beat was about three feet below the top of one side of the stockade and extended nearly its whole length. At one end, by the magazine house, was constructed a small shelter for the protection of the sentinel during inclement weather. The outer walls of the Quartermaster's store extended somewhat outside the stockade.

Alexander states*: "The material of which it was built was prepared at Fort Crawford, Prairie du Chien, Wis., and the cost of making a wagon-road, the same ever since known as the Old Military road, and transporting the material to its destination, brought the cost of building the fort to \$93,000." However, all the material was not prepared at Fort Crawford, as Mr. Goddard says, "The government had a sawmill at Old Mission, where all the hardwood used in the fort was cut. The stone used was quarried in the immediate vicinity of the fort. The pine lumber and other material was brought from Fort Crawford."

Alexander says:† "The first blacksmith in Winneshiek county was Harmon Snyder. He came from Prairie du Chien with the force (of about 50 mechanics) detailed to build the fort, and was employed, chiefly, in work for the garrison. At the same time he did a great deal of work for the Indians. They would stand around and watch him while at his work, with wonder and admiration."

Antoine Grignon, who aided in the removal of the Winnebagoes in 1848, says, "Fort Atkinson was quite a lively place when I was there; there was a company of cavalry there at that

* In his history of the county.

† Same reference as above.

time." Concerning the Indian agency which was established in connection with the fort, Mr. Kingsley relates that, "The Winnebagoes were given food, clothing, gold, and silver. In money they received \$46.00 per head, twice a year. The head of the family represented his family by the number of sticks in his hand, and the annuity was disbursed to him accordingly. I have heard my mother say that she was a young girl, about fourteen years old, the time of the Turkey river reservation days; her father, being a sub-chief, drew a portion of the supplies; these were tied up in a buffalo robe and put on a pony that she rode. The cash amounted to between \$1,000 and \$2,000."

February 24, 1849, the post was finally abandoned. It was turned over to the Secretary of the Interior for disposition January 10, 1851. At the present time all that is still standing of the fort is the cannon-house of the southwest corner.

"Orders No. 9.

Headquarters 6th Military Department.
St. Louis, Missouri, February 10th, 1849.

In pursuance of General Orders No. 3, of the 23d ultimo, for the abandonment of Fort Atkinson, the Company of the 6th Infantry stationed there will be withdrawn to Fort Crawford, and will form a part of the garrison of that post.

The public stores at Fort Atkinson will be removed or sold, as may be found expedient under the circumstances.

By order Bvt. Major General Twiggs:

D. C. BUELL,
Asst. Adjt. Gen.

Although the military appearance was no longer kept up, the fort was not entirely abandoned as a post. A discharged soldier of the regular army, named Alexander Faulkner, who held the rank of first sergeant, was appointed by the government to look after it. Josiah Goddard, who, with his family, moved from Wisconsin to this section in 1849, spent the winter of 1849-

50 in the old fort when it was in charge of Mr. Faulkner. Soon after, Faulkner was relieved by Geo. Cooney, whom Alexander says*, "was a well-known citizen of the county, who lived in the vicinity of the old fort." The fort became useless as government property, and was sold at public auction to one J. M. Flowers for \$3,521. The reservation is described as containing 1,920 acres. This land was finally disposed of under the provisions of the acts of Congress of July 30, 1856, and June 7, 1860.

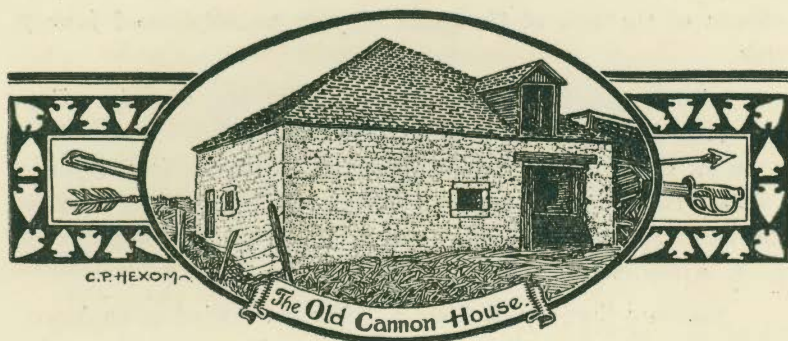
Of the officers who served at this post, six, namely: Captain John J. Abercrombie and Lieutenants Schuyler Hamilton, John H. King, and Joseph B. Plummer, of the 1st Infantry, and Captain Edwin V. Sumner and Lieutenant Alfred Pleasanton, of the 1st Dragoons, attained to the rank of general officers in the U. S. Army in the Civil War.

Assistant Surgeon William S. King was retired as an Assistant Surgeon General. Captain Osborne Cross of the 1st Infantry was transferred to the Quartermaster's Department and became Assistant Quartermaster General with the rank of Colonel. Captain Sidney Burbank of the 1st Infantry commanded his regiment, 2d U. S. Infantry, during the Civil War and was breveted for gallantry.

Lieutenants Simon B. Buckner and Henry Heth of the 6th Infantry, and Abraham Buford and Alexander W. Reynolds of the 1st, resigned their commissions at the outbreak of the Civil War and became general officers in the Confederate service. Assistant Surgeon Charles H. Smith served in the medical department of the Confederate army. A. R. Young, father of Frank Young of Decorah, was a soldier at Fort Atkinson, and left with other troops for Mexico, but returned soon after the country was opened to settlers.

* In his history of the county.

The first death of a white man in Winneshiek county was that of a government teamster named Howard, frozen to death October 4, 1840, near Castalia, while driving from Fort Crawford to Fort Atkinson. He was buried at the latter place. The first white child born in the county was Miss Mary Jane Tapper, born at the fort January 16, 1841.



REMOVAL OF THE WINNEBAGOES FROM IOWA

October 13, 1846, the Winnebagoes ceded "all claim to land," and especially their rights on the Neutral Ground, and were given a tract of land selected by the chiefs at Long Prairie, Minn. The Indians were not satisfied with the location, and most of them remained scattered throughout the country.

Mr. Henry M. Rice secured the contract to remove these to Minnesota, and employed Moses Paquette, Antoine Grignon, and others to assist him. Antoine Grignon, who is now eighty-four years old and a resident of Wisconsin, says, "I went to school four years with Moses Paquette; he was a Winnebago mixed blood. I have no Indian name, but am part Sioux and Winnebago. I helped locate camps for H. M. Rice, along the river, and we gathered the Indians together in La Crosse, took them by steamboat to St. Paul, then overland by wagon to Long Prairie, Minn. I remained at Long Prairie until 1854. They disliked very much to leave Iowa. They were removed in wagons, being guarded by dragoons from Fort Atkinson."

The names of the twenty-four Indian signers of the Treaty of Washington, negotiated with the Winnebago Indians October 13, 1846, are as follows:

Hoong-ho-no-kaw.

Is-jaw-go-bo-kaw.

Co-no-ha-ta-kaw.

Naw-hoo-skaw-kaw.

Shoong-skaw-kaw.

Kooz-a-ray-kaw.
Waw-ma-noo-ka-kaw.
Ha-naw-hoong-per-kaw.
Waw-roo-jaw-hee-kaw.
Baptist-Lasalica.
Waw-kon-chaw-per-kaw.
Kaw-how-ah-kaw.
Hakh-ee-nee-kaw.
Waw-kon-chaw-ho-no-kaw.
Maw-hee-ko-shay-naw-zhee-kaw.
Wo-gie-qua-kaw.
Waw-kon-chaw-she-shick-kaw.
Chas-chun-kaw.
Naw-hey-kee-kaw.
Ah-hoo-zheb-kaw.
Maw-nee-ho-no-nic.
Maw-ho-kee-wee-kaw.
Sho-go-nee-kaw.
Watch-ha-ta-kaw, (by Henry M. Rice, his delegate.)

Mr. Lamere has translated most of the above names; the translations are as follows: Hoong-ho-no-kaw, or Little Chief (also called Little Priest); he was a member of the Wolf clan.

Co-no-ha-ta-kaw;—"Co-no" is the name of all the first born male children of the Winnebagoes (the word "co-no" does not mean first-born, but is the name of the first born); "ha-ta" means "big." As there were usually two or three families in a lodge and more than one "co-no," they usually called the older one "co-no-ha-ta-kaw," meaning, "older, or big-first-born."

Maw-hoo-skaw-kaw, or White Sturgeon; this is a Fish clan name.

Shoong-skaw-kaw, or White Dog; a member of the Wolf clan.

Kooz-a-ray-kaw, or the Created; a member of the Bear clan.

Waw-ma-noo-ka-kaw, or the Stealer (Thief); this is a self-taken name, a right the warriors had, especially, when they had accomplished anything of importance in battle. This particular name signifies that he overcomes his enemies so easily that it is like stealing them.

Ha-naw-hoong-per-kaw;—"Ha-naw" is the name of the second born male child in a family; "hoong-per" signifies "good chief," thus the meaning would be "the second born good chief;" his English name was "White-horse" and he was a member of the Wolf clan.

Wo-gie-qua-kaw, or "Strikes them as he comes." This is a Buffalo clan name, and is taken from the actions of a bull buffalo running a herd, when he seems to lead or drive them by butting, or striking them about.

Wau-kon-chaw-she-shick-kaw, or Bad Thunder (a Thunder clan name).

Chas-chun-kaw, or the Wave (a Fish clan name.)

Naw-hey-kee-kaw, or "He who makes trees dead;" a Thunder clan name taken from the action of the lightning when it strikes trees, so that they dry up and die.

Ah-hoo-zheb-kaw, or Short Wing (Young Winneshiek).

Waw-roo-jaw-hee-kaw, or "Thunders on them" (Thunder clan name).

Waw-kon-chaw-per-kaw, or the Good Thunder (Thunder clan name.)

Waw-kon-chaw-ho-no-kaw, or the Little Thunder (Thunder clan name).

Maw-hee-koo-shay-naw-zhee-kaw, or Little Decorah (One who Stands and Reaches the Skies).

Maw-nee-ho-no-nic, or Little Walker (Eagle clan name).

Maw-ho-kee-wee-kaw, or "He who goes along in the sky;" the word "kaw" on the end of every name means "he" or "the."

Sho-go-nee-kaw, or Little Hill.

Watch-ha-ta-kaw (undoubtedly One-eyed Decorah).

About 1300 were removed to Minnesota at this time, leaving, it was estimated, about 400 still remaining in Iowa and Wisconsin. Others were removed in 1850.

"A place of notoriety that existed in the early history of Winneshiek county was a spot called 'Grab-all.' This place was a high bench of timber land, half way between the Iowa trail and Postville. It was given this name because the Government stationed a sergeant's guard there to 'grab all' the Indians passing that way, for removal."*

It is easily understood why the Winnebagoes, when later removed to other places, returned in little bands, quite frequently, to visit the scenes they loved so well; they persisted in this until civilization shut them out forever. The Winnebagoes had many favorite camping sites along the rivers of the county. Mr. Lamere says that the Winnebago Indian name for Iowa river, with reference to the Upper Iowa, is "Wax-hoche-ni-la," meaning Iowa river, also called "Wax-hoche-ni-sha-nuk-la." The Winnebago Indian name for the Turkey river is "Zee-zee-ke-ni-la," meaning Turkey river, also called "Zee-zee-ke-ni-sha-nuk-la." James Smith, a Winnebago, states,† "a river south of Lansing, Ia., is called Yellow Hair river‡ by the Indians; the Winnebago name for this river is 'Na-jew-zee-ni-sha-nuk-la'."

* Alexander's "History of Winneshiek and Allamakee Counties."

† A statement made to Mr. Oliver Lamere.

‡ Evidently the Yellow river, which has its source in Winneshiek county.

REMINISCENCES

When the first homeseekers came to Winneshiek county the remains of several Winnebago Indian villages were still in existence. Numerous Indian trails were in evidence in nearly all parts of the county, many of which led to the site of the present city of Decorah.

In "Reminiscences of Springfield Township †" Hon. A. Jacobson states: "The Indians who had inhabited this portion of the country where we settled were removed by government troops two years previous to our arrival. They had evidently intended to return at some future time as they had made large cellar-like holes in the ground in which were deposited all kinds of goods covered with the bark of trees. Such things as corn, feathers, axes, and kettles were in good preservation when exhumed by the new settlers.

"Quite large parties of Indians traversed the country, but they had their homes in the territory of Minnesota and did not molest us in the least. There were no settlements northwest of us the first year, hence being on the frontier we often felt uneasy, having heard that some traders sold them whiskey.

"Indian trails, well marked, crossed the country in various directions, and with little deviation continued to be the roads of early settlers, until the fencing in of the fields pushed the roads into the worst places."

Alonzo Bradish, who came to Decorah in 1852, says*: "One of their trails followed the east bend of Pleasant Hill and

† Sec. II, pg. 11, Atlas of Winneshiek County, 1905.

* In a personal interview with him.

left off at a point about where the Catholic church now stands on East Broadway. This trail was well marked by frequent travel, and in places there were considerable depressions below the surface, caused, to a certain extent, by the dragging of tipi poles fastened to the backs of horses [travois].

"In the early days travelers had to ford the stream where the Twin Bridges now span the Upper Iowa. The road leading from here up through the valley, to the district now called Clay Hill, was known as the St. Paul stage road, and the valley was called Cruson's Hollow. This route was very frequently traveled by the Indians. A favorite camping place of the Indians, when traveling through, was on the ground now known as the Court House Square.

"They always carried a blanket, and wore leggings that reached up over the thigh, and a clout. Many carried hatchets, of which the most were made of iron. The young Indian boys were expert marksmen with the bow and arrow, hitting pennies and nickels at fifty to sixty feet distance.

"I had opened a hardware and tin shop, and here the Indians occasionally came to have their guns repaired. These guns were the only kind used then and were known as flintlocks, the ammunition being big lead balls. The Indians were supplied with them by the government.

"A young Indian and his squaw were camped at a spot about where the stockyards are now located at the east end of Water street. The river at this time was very low and he busied himself in making a dugout canoe from the trunk of a large cottonwood which he had felled. When the high water came they put the boat in the stream and getting in were soon on their way down stream, headed for Lansing at the mouth of the Upper Iowa, where a part of the tribe were encamped."

Philip Husted, an old settler, relates * that, "Quite often

* In a personal interview with him.

parties of Winnebago Indians would travel through the country; one of their favorite camping places was on the Yellow river near Frankville. They would sell their beadwork, and were very pleasant and peaceable with the whites."

A number of years ago Mr. E. C. Bailey met two Indians at the Methodist church corner, on upper Broadway. One was a very old Indian, and the other middle-aged. Mr. Bailey (who was then about twenty years old) was asked if he knew where a Mr. E. Anderson lived. One of them opened a neat note book in which was written, "These Indians are good Winnebago Indians, and they are to be trusted."

(Signed.)

E. ANDERSON,
Sheriff of Winneshiek county.

It is not definitely known what year Mr. Anderson was sheriff, but his statement is only another example of the confidence early settlers placed with the Winnebagoes.

Although Iowa was in a manner always neutral ground and escaped many of the worst results of the encounters between the whites and the Indians, the early settlers of Winneshiek county had their Indian scare, and they had good reason to become alarmed. What led to this was the Indian uprising and Sioux massacre in Minnesota in June, 1862.

They had swept Minnesota with bullet and brand
Till her borders lay waste as a desert of sand,
When we in Dakota awakened to find
That the red flood had risen and left us behind.
Then we rallied to fight them,—Sioux, Sissetons, all
Who had ravaged unchecked to the gates of Saint Paul.—
—Joseph Mills Hanson, "Frontier Ballads."

At this time the Winnebagoes were at Blue Earth in southern Minnesota. Although they took no part in the Sioux massacre, and even though they offered the government their services in punishing the Sioux, the inhabitants of Minnesota de-

manded their removal. They were hastily removed to South Dakota, where they suffered many hardships.

This Indian scare was general throughout the county and was an occurrence well remembered by the old settlers. A contributor to *The Decorah Journal*, 1882, states: "As I write the word 'Indians,' my memory takes me back to the early days of my childhood in Decorah. Again I see a rider on a foaming steed dash along Broadway, as I did twenty or more years ago, shouting at the top of his voice, 'The Indians are coming!' Again I see the street thronged with blanched faced men and trembling women, running to and fro in wild excitement and gazing with anxious faces off into the west * * * . Again I hear the whispered consultation of the men as to the best means of protecting their loved ones. Again I feel my hand clasped in that of my sainted mother as I toddle along at her side, down Mill street hill, across the old red bridge, and over to West Decorah—a place of imagined safety. It was a false alarm, and probably faded from the memory of many of our readers, and remembered by others only as the dim recollection of a half forgotten dream."

At Decorah, men, women, and children gathered on the Court House Square, and prepared to withstand a siege. Settlers left their homes and gathered in Decorah as a place of refuge, many of them camping on the flat now known as Park Addition. Men armed themselves with any kind of weapon that lay handy, and determined to defend their families and homes, but were greatly relieved when the threatened attack proved to be only a rumor.

J. C. Fredenburg, of Canoe township, says*, "I remember the Indian scare. Some one came to our house one night about twelve o'clock and told father the Indians were coming and that they were about twenty miles away, killing people and burning

* Sec. II, pg. 14, Atlas of Winneshiek County.

all the houses. Father and mother talked it over and father said, 'I will go to Burr Oak and see what is to be done.' He left mother and me at home, and when he arrived at Burr Oak nearly all the people were there for several miles around, some with their teams and families. They held a council and decided that all should meet there and build a fort for their protection, but no Indians came, so the people settled down again. It was some time, however, before all fear had vanished."

Other similar accounts might be given, but the preceding narratives describe the conditions as they existed, during this scare, throughout the county.

There is no evidence to show that any Indian murders took place within the boundaries of our county. There were, however, several such murders committed in the near neighborhood: that of the Gardner family, in Fayette county; of Riley, near Monona; and of Herchy, near the mouth of the Volga. The contaminating influence of the bootlegger was the direct cause of these murderous deeds. "Firewater" was the curse of the Indian, as it has since been to many a white man.

Taft Jones and Graham Thorn were two bootleggers who infested the neighborhood of the Winnebago reservation. The government did not allow such characters to come on the reservation, so they came as near to its boundaries as they dared and established so-called trading-posts in the vicinity of Monona, giving them the names of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Indians used to frequent these places and always got badly cheated. Alexander gives* the following account:—

An old Indian visited Taft Jones' den, at Sodom, and traded in all his worldly effects for whiskey, he even sold the blanket from his shoulders. Becoming intoxicated, he was turned out of doors, and on his way to his lodge died from exposure and cold. The next morning his son, a youth of about twenty sum-

* In his history of the county.

mers, found the dead body of his father out in the snow, naked and frozen. His revengeful feelings were aroused, and going to the whiskey den at Gomorrah, he shot the first man he saw through the window. Unfortunately it happened to be an in-offensive man named Riley. A detachment of troops under command of Lieutenant David S. Wilson was sent out to capture the Indian who committed the murder. He was apprehended, taken to Fort Atkinson, and confined in the guard-house; but by the connivance of a sympathizing white man he escaped and was never recaptured. Jones lived a short time after this occurrence and died from chronic alcoholism."

Thus an attempt has been made to give in brief outline the Indian history of Winneshiek county. The writer soon discovered, after taking up the study of the subject, that nowhere was accurate information in concise form to be had in regard to the aboriginal inhabitants of the county; their occupation of the county seems to have been an obscure period in their history. The writer has regarded it as well worth while to gather the data here presented, and has had in view that this article should faithfully preserve the early scenes of our predecessors in the county.

The river, whose peaceful waters reflected the light of their campfires, now furnishes the power that lights the modern structures of the white men, by which their wigwams have been supplanted. But the memory of the red men will never perish from the minds of those who have succeeded them. The names of Winneshiek and Decorah, that are attached to our county and county seat, will be an enduring monument to their former occupation of the soil.

Here still a lofty rock remains,
On which the curious eye may trace
(Now wasted half by wearing rains)
The fancies of a ruder race.

Here still an aged elm aspires,
 Beneath whose far projecting shade
(And which the shepherd still admires)
 The children of the forest played.

There oft a restless Indian queen
 (Pale Sheba with her braid and hair),
And many a barbarous form is seen
 To chide the man that lingers there.

By moonlight moons, o'er moistening dews,
 In habit for the chase arrayed,
The hunter still the deer pursues,
 The hunter and the deer--a shade!

And long shall timorous Fancy see
 The painted chief, and pointed spear,
And Reason's self shall bow the knee
 To shadows and delusions here.—

—Closing stanzas of Philip Freneau's "The Indian Burying-ground."